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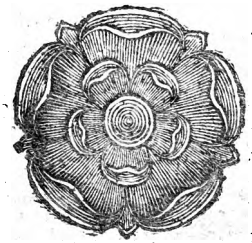
FORTY EIGHT SERMONS AND DISCOURSES ON Several Subjects, AND OCCASIONS.

In Four Volumes.

BY

ROBERT SOUTH, D.D. *&c.*



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TWELVE

SERMONS

Preached at

SEVERAL TIMES,

And upon ſeveral

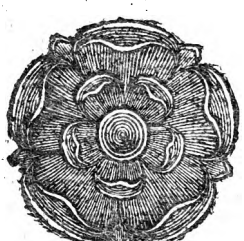
OCCASIONS.

BY

ROBERT SOUTH, D.D. *&c.*

VOL. IV.

Never before Publiſhed.



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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

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To the Right Honourable,

WILLIAM BROMLEY, Esq;

Some time *Speaker* of the Honourable the *House of Commons*;

And after that

Principal Secretary of State to Her Majesty Queen *ANNE*, of ever Blessed Memory;

In both Stations Great and Eminent,

BUT

In Nothing greater than *in*, and *from* Himself;

ROBERT SOUTH,

His most devoted Servant,

Humbly Offers and Presents this

FOURTH VOLUME

OF HIS

SERMONS,

As the Last, and best Testimony he can give of the High Esteem, and Sincere Affection, which he, the Author of them, bears, and ever must, and shall bear to that Excellent Person.

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A

SERMON

Preached at

St. *Mary*'s Church in *Oxon*,

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

ON

The 29th of *July* 1660,

Being the Time of the KING's Commissioners meeting there, soon after the *Restauration*, for the Visitation of that *University*.

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The Scribe instructed, &c.

A

SERMON

ON

St. MATTH. xiii. Ver. 52.

Then said He unto them, therefore every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a Man that is an Housholder, which bringeth out of his Treasure Things new and old.

IN this Chapter we have a large Discourse from the great Preacher of Righteousness; A Discourse fraught with all the commending Excellencies of Speech; delightful for its

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Variety, admirable for its convincing Quickneſs, and argumentative Cloſeneſs, and (which is ſeldom an Excellency in other Sermons) *excellent for its Length.*

For that, which is carried on with a continued, unflagging Vigor of Expreſſion, can never be thought tedious, nor conſequently long. And Chriſt, who was not only the *Preacher*, but Himſelf alſo the *Word*, was undoubtedly furniſhed with a Strain of Heavenly Oratory, far above the Heights of all human Rhetorick whatſoever: His Sermons being of that Grace and Ornament, that (as the World generally goes) they might have prevailed even without *Truth*, and yet pregnant with ſuch irreſiſtible *Truth*, that the Ornament might have been ſpared; and indeed it ſtill ſeems to have been uſed, rather to *gratify*, than *perſwade* the Hearer. So that wé may (only with a reverential Acknowledgment both of the Difference of the Perſons, and the of Subject) give that Teſtimony of Chriſt's Sermons, which *Cicero* (the great Maſter of the *Roman* Eloquence) did of *Demoſthenes*'s Orations, who being asked, which of them was the beſt, anſwered the *longeſt*.

Accordingly, our Saviour having in the Verſe here pitched upon for my Text, finiſhed

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nished His foregoing Discourse, he now closes up all with the Character of a *Preacher*, or *Evangelist*; still addressing Himself to His Disciples, as to a designed Seminary of Preachers, or rather indeed, as to a Kind of little itinerant Academy (if I may so call it) of such as were to take His Heavenly Doctrines for the sole Rule of their Practice, and His excellent Way of Preaching, for the standing Pattern of their Imitation; thus lying at the Feet of their Blessed Lord, with the humblest Attention of Scholars, and the lowest Prostration of Subjects. The very *Name* and *Notion* of a *Disciple* implying, and the Nature of the Thing itself requiring both these Qualifications.

Now the Discussion of the Words before us shall lie in these following Particulars.

1*st*, To shew, What is here meant by the *Scribe*.

2*dly*, What *by being instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*. And

3*dly* and *Lastly*, What *by bringing out of his Treasure Things* new and old; and how upon this Account he stands compared to an *Housholder*.

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And 1. Concerning the Word *Scribe*. It was a Name, which amongſt the *Jews* was applyed to two Sorts of Officers.

1. To a *Civil*; and ſo it ſignifies a *Notary*, or in a large Senſe any one imployed to draw up *Deeds* or *Writings*. Whether in an higher Station or Degree, as we read in the 2 *King.* xxii. and the 3d *Verſe*, That *Shaphan* was γραμματεὺς βασιλέως, the *King*'s *Scribe*, or Secretary; or, as in a lower Senſe, and Acception of the Word, we find this Appellation given to that Officer, who appeared in quelling the Uproar at *Epheſus*, as we read in *Act.* xix. where in the 35th *Verſe*, he is called γραμματεὺς, which (I think) we may fitly enough render, (as our *Engliſh* Text does) the *Town Clerk*, or *Publick Notary of the City*. To this Sort alſo ſome would refer thoſe mentioned in *Matth.* ii. and the 4th *Verſe*, who are there called *the Scribes of the People*; as if they were ſuch Notaries, as we have been ſpeaking of; but the Buſineſs, about which we read in that Chapter, that *Herod* called them together, ſeems to evince the Contrary; which was to enquire of ſuch as were skilled in the Writings of the Prophets, *When and where the* Meſſiah *was to be born*. The Reſolution of

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of which was very unlikely to be had from those who were only Notaries and Journeymen to Courts, to draw up Inditements, Bonds, Leases, Contracts, and the like. And from whence we may, no doubt, conclude, that this Sort of *Scribes* was quite of another Nature from the *Scribe* here alluded to in the Text; and which shall be next treated of: And therefore,

2. This Name *Scribe* signifies a Church Officer, one skilful, and conversant *in the Law to interpret and explain it.* For still we find the Scribes reckoned with the great Doctors of the *Jewish* Church, and for the most part joined with the *Pharisees* in the Writings of the *Evangelists*, and by St. *Paul*, with *the Disputer of this World*, 1 Cor. i. 20. and sometimes called also, Νομικοὶ, *Lawyers*, as in St. *Luk.* vii. 30. and in St. *Luk.* xi. 52. that is to say, Men skilful and expert in the *Mosaick* Law. Not that these *Scribes* were really, and properly any *Part* of the *Pharisees* (as some have thought) for *Pharisee* was the Name of a *Sect*, *Scribe* of an Office: And whereas we read in *Act.* xxiii. and the 9th *Verse*, of the γραμματεῖς, there said to be τῦ μέρες τῶν Φαρισαίων, *of Part of the* Pharisees; the Word [*of Part*] is not to be understood

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derstood in respect of *Distribution*, as it signifies a *Correlate* to the *Whole*, but in respect of *Opinion*; as that they were of the *Pharisees Part* or *Side*, or (in other Words) joined with them in some of their Opinions; as possibly others of them might join with the *Sadducees* in some of theirs: By *Scribe* therefore must be here meant *a Doctor or Expounder of the Law to the People*; such an one, as *Ezra* that excellent Person, so renowned amongst the *Jews*; who in *Ezra* vii. *Ver. 6.* is said to have *been a ready Scribe in the Law of* Moses. For though, indeed, the Word *Scribe* in the *English* and *Latin* imports barely a *Writer*, and the *Greek* γραμματεὺς, by its Derivation from γράφω, strictly signifies no more, yet by its nearer Derivation from γράμμα, which signifies a *Letter*, it seems to represent to us the *Nature* of the Office from the *Notation* of the *Name*, *viz.* that *these Scribes were Men of the bare Letter, or the Text*; whose Business it was to explain and give the *literal Sense* and Meaning of the Law. And therefore, that the Men here spoken of, whom the *Jews* accounted of such eminent Skill in it, should by their Office be only *Writers, or Transcribers* of it, can with no more Reason, I think, be affirmed, than

if

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if we ſhould allow him to be a skilful Divine, who ſhould tranſcribe other Mens *Works*, and, which is more, preach them, when he had done. But

2. As for the meaning of that Expreſſion of *being inſtructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven.* By *the Kingdom of Heaven* is here ſignified to us, only the Preaching of the Goſpel, or the Condition and State of the Church, under the Goſpel; as, *repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*, that is, *the Goſpel is ſhortly to be preached:* Now we are to take Notice, that it was the Way of Chriſt in His Preaching to the *Jews*, to expreſs the *Offices, and Things* belonging to His Church under the Goſpel, by alluding to thoſe of the *Jewiſh* Church under the Law, as being known, and familiar to them. Hence he calls a *Miniſter*, or Preacher of the Goſpel, a *Scribe*; and this from the Analogy of what the Scribe did in the Explication of the *Moſaick* Law, with what the Goſpel Miniſter was to do, in preaching and preſſing Home the Doctrines of Chriſtianity upon the Heart and Conſcience; much the harder Work (God knows) of the two.

Now the Word, which we here render *Inſtructed*, in the *Greek* is μαθητευθεὶς, one who was

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was *taught, ſchooled,* or *diſciplined to* the Work by long Exerciſe and Study. He was not to be *Inſpired, or blown into the Miniſtry,* but to come to it by mature Study and Labour. He was to fetch his Preparations from *Induſtry,* not *Infuſion.* And for as much as Chriſt's Deſign was to expreſs *Evangelical* Officers by *Legal,* there muſt, (as I ſhew) be ſome Reſemblance between them; and ſince the Matter, or Subject they were engaged in was wholly diverſe, this Reſemblance was to hold, at leaſt, in the Qualification of the Perſons, *viz.* That as the *Scribe of the Law,* did with much Labour ſtock himſelf with all Variety of Learning requiſite to find out the Senſe of the ſame, ſo the *Evangelical Scribe,* or *Preacher* ſhould bring as much Learning, and beſtow as much Labour in his Employment, as the other did in his; eſpecially ſince it *required* full as much, and *deſerved* a great deal more: And ſo paſs we to the

3*d Thing* propoſed, which was to ſhew what is to be underſtood *by bringing out of his Treaſure Things new and old.* By Treaſure is here ſignified that, which in *Latin* is called *Penus,* a *Store-houſe,* or *Repoſitory*; and the bringing out thence Things new and

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and old was (as ſome are of Opinion) a kind of Proverb, or proverbial Speech amongſt the *Hebrews*, expreſſing a Man's giving a plentiful or liberal Entertainment to his Friends, and ſuch as came about him. And accordingly, as here borrowed from the *Houſe-holder*, and applyed to the *Goſpel-Scribe* in the Text, it makes the Drift and Import of the whole Parable to amount to This. That as the former, if a Man of Subſtance and Sufficiency, of a large Stock, and as large a Mind, will entertain his Friends and Gueſts with Plenty and Variety of Proviſion, anſwerable to the Difference of Mens Palates, as well as to the Difference of the Seaſon; not confining them to the ſame ſtanding common Fare, but, as Occaſion requires, adding ſomething of more Coſt and Rarity beſides; ſo our *Goſpel-Scribe* or *Preacher*, in the Entertainment of his Spiritual Gueſts, is not always to ſet before them, only the main Subſtantials of Religion, whether for Belief, or Practice, but as the Matter ſhall require, to add alſo *Illuſtration* to the one, and *Enforcement* to the other, ſometimes perſuading, ſometimes terrifying; and accordingly addreſſing himſelf to the afflicted and deſponding with *Goſpel Lenitives*, and

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and to the hard and obstinate with *legal Corrosives*; and since the Relish of all is not the same, he is to apply to the Vulgar with plain familiar Similitudes, and to the Learned with greater Choiceness of Language, and Closeness of Argument; and moreover, since every Age of the Church more peculiarly needs the clearer Discussion of some Truth, or other, then more particularly doubted of, or opposed, therefore to the inculcating the general acknowledged Points of Christianity, he is to add something of the Controversies, Opinions, and Vices of the Times; otherwise he cannot reach Mens Minds and Inclinations, which are apt to be argued this way, or that way, according to different Times and Occasions; and consequently he falls so far short of a *good Orator*, and much more of an *accurate Preacher.*

This, I conceive, is the genuine and full Sense of the Words we are now upon, and which I shall yet farther strengthen with this Observation: 'That we shall find that Christ's 'Design all along the Evangelists was to place 'the OEconomy of the Church under the 'Gospel, above that of the *Jewish* Church 'under the Law, as more Excellent in e-'very

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'very Particular. Now it was the Way of the Scribes then, to dwell wholly upon the Letter of the Law, and what *Moses* said; Shewing the Construction, the Coherence, and Force of his Words, only sometimes sprinkling them a little with Tradition, and the pompous Allegation of their ancient *Rabbies*, Ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις. But Christ, who (we read) taught with Authority, and not as the Scribes; as one not only *expounding*, but also *commanding*, the Words, took a Freedom of Expression, in shewing not the Sense of *Moses* only, but the further Sense and Intent of God Himself speaking to *Moses*; and then cloathing this Sense in Parables, Similitudes, and other Advantages of Rhetorick, so as to give it an easier Entrance and Admission into the Mind and Affections; and what He did Himself, He recommended to the Practice of His Disciples. So that, I think, we may not unfitly account for the Meaning of our Saviour in this Chapter thus. You see how the Scribes of the Law with much Anxiety and Niceness confine themselves to the Letter of *Moses*, but *the Scribe who is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*, and fitted to preach the Gospel must not dwell only upon the Letter and

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and Shell of Things, but often enlarge and amplify upon the Subject he handles, adapting his Diſcourſe to the various Circumſtances, Tempers, and Apprehenſions of his Hearers; and ſo letting it riſe, or fall in the *Degrees* of its Plainneſs, or Quickneſs, according to his Hearers Dulneſs, or Docility.

Thus, I hope, I have made out the full Import of the Words, and the Deſign of our Saviour in them, which I ſhall now more throughly proſecute in this Propoſition, naturally reſulting from them ſo explained, *viz.*

That the greateſt Advantages, both as to Largeneſs of Natural, and Exquiſiteneſs of acquired Abilities, are not only conſiſtent with, but required to the due Performance of the Work and Buſineſs of a Preacher of the Goſpel.

Not that I affirm, that every one, who has not ſuch a Furniture of Parts and Knowledge, is therefore wholly unfit or forbidden to be a Preacher, for then moſt of us might for ever ſit down and adore, but not venture upon this Work. But in giving a Rule for any Thing or Action, we muſt aſſign the utmoſt Perfection, which either of them is capable

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capable of, and to which Men ought to aspire; not to which, they of Necessity, must or can attain. We know the *Copy* always falls short of the *Original*, and the *Performance* of the *Precept*. But still the Rule must be *Absolute*, and highly Perfect; otherwise, we should never look upon our Improvement, as our *Duty*, or our Imperfections, as our *Defects*.

In the handling of the Proposition drawn forth, I shall shew

1*st*, What Qualifications are required as necessary to a Minister of the Word, from the Force of the Comparison between *Him*, and the *Scribe mentioned in the Text*.

2*dly*, I shall shew the Reasons to evince, and prove their Necessity: And

3*dly*, I shall draw some Inferences from the Whole.

And first, concerning *the Qualifications required*, &c.

I shall bring them under these two.

1. An Ability and Strength of the Powers, and Faculties of the Mind. And

2. An habitual Preparation of the same, by Study, Exercise, and Improvement.

Which Two (I conceive) contain all that both *Nature* and *Art* can do in this Matter.

And

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And first, for the first of these Two.

1. A natural Ability and Strength of the Powers, and Faculties of the Mind. And what these are, is apparent, *viz. Judgment, Memory*, and *Invention.*

Now, whether these three are three distinct Things both in *Being* distinguished from one another, and likewise from the Substance of the Soul itself considered, without any such Faculties, but only receiving these several Denominations from the several Respects arising from the several Actions exerted immediately by itself upon *several Objects*, or several Qualities of the same Object; I say, whether of these two it is, is not easy to decide, and it is well, that it is not necessary. *Aquinas*, and most with him affirm the former, and *Scotus* with his Followers the latter. But yet to assert with him, that in a *created* Nature, *Essence* and *Power*, are the same, seems too near, and bold a Step to the incommunicable *Simplicity* of *the Divine*; and according to the received Way of arguing will pass for a great Absurdity. However, not to insist farther upon a Point meerly Philosophical, but supposing (at least probably) that (according to the common Opinion) the Soul acts, or works by *Powers* and

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and *Faculties*, as well as *Habits*, diſtinct from its own *Subſtance*; I proceed to ſhew the Neceſſity of the three forementioned *Faculties* in the Buſineſs of the Miniſtry. And

1*ſt*, For that great leading one, the *Judgment*. Without which, how can any Controverſy in Philoſophy or Divinity be duly managed, ſtated, or determined? How can that which is *ambiguous* be cleared, that which is *fallacious* be detected, or even *Truth itſelf* be defended? How, where the Words of Scripture may bear ſeveral Senſes, ſome *Proper*, and ſome *Figurative*, can we be aſſured, which the Writer, or Speaker of them intended them in? How alſo, without this, when a Scripture has been corrupted, partly by filching ſome Words out of it, and partly by a ſuppoſititious foiſting of ſome in, ſhall the Whole be reſcued from the Impoſture paſs'd upon it, and ſo reſtored true and genuine to itſelf? And laſtly, how ſhall many ſeeming Claſhings, and dark Paſſages in Sacred Hiſtory and Chronology be placed in ſuch a Light, as may throughly ſatisfy, or at leaſt effectually ſilence the Doubtful and Exceptious? All which Particulars (with many more of the like Nature) being confeſſedly

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knotty and difficult, can never be accorded, but by a competent Stock of critical Learning; and can any one (even according to the very *Signification* of the Word) be said to be a *Critick*, and yet not *judicious*. And then,

2*dly*, For *Memory*. This may be reckoned Twofold. 1. That which serves to treasure up our Reading, or Observations. And 2. That which serves to suggest to us, in our reciting, or repeating of any Thing, which we had endeavoured to commit to our Memory before. I distinguish them, because one may be, and often is excellent, where the other is deficient. But now, were this never so large, yet Theology is of that vast Compass, as to employ and exhaust it. For what Volumes are there of *Antiquity*, Church-History, and other Divine Learning, which well deserve reading, and to what Purpose do we read, if we cannot remember? But then also, for the Reciting or Repeating Part of Memory; that is so necessary, that *Cicero* himself observes of Oratory (which indeed upon a Sacred Subject is Preaching) that upon the Want of Memory alone,

Primo Libro de Oratore. *Omnia, etiamsi præclarissima fuerint, in Oratore peritura.*

And we know, that to a popular Auditory it

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it is upon the Matter, *All*. There being, in the Eſteem of many, but little Difference between *Sermons read*, and *Homilies*, ſave only this, that Homilies are *much better*. And then for the

3*d* Faculty. Which is, *Invention*. A Faculty acting chiefly in the Strength of what is offered it by the *Imagination*. This is ſo far from being admitted by many as neceſſary, that it is decryed by them as utterly Unlawful; ſuch grand Exemplars I mean, as make their own Abilities the ſole Meaſure of what is fit or unfit, lawful or unlawful, ſo that what they themſelves cannot reach, others forſooth, ought not to attempt. But I ſee not why Divinity ſhould ſuffer for their Narrowneſs, and be deprived of the Service of a moſt uſeful, and excellent Endowment of the Mind, and which gives a Gloſs, and a Shine to all the reſt. For I reckon upon this as a great Truth, That there can be no Endowment in the Soul of Man, which God Himſelf is the Cauſe and Giver of, but may even in its higheſt and choiceſt Operations be ſanctified and employed in the Work of the Miniſtry. And there is alſo another Principle, which I account altogether as true as the former; namely, *That Piety engages no*

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Man to be dull; though lately, I confeſs, it paſſed with ſome for a Mark of *Regeneration.* And when I ſhall ſee theſe Principles diſproved, I ſhall be ready to grant all Exerciſe of the Fancy or Invention, in the handling Things Sacred, to be unlawful. As Fancy, indeed, is often taken in the worſt Senſe for a conceited, curious, whimſical Brain, which is apt to pleaſe itſelf in ſtrange, odd, and ungrounded Notions; ſo I confeſs, that nothing is more contrary to, or deſtructive of true Divinity; but then I muſt add withall, that if Fancy be taken in this Senſe, thoſe who damn it in its other ſober and right Acception, have much the greateſt Share of it themſelves. But if, on the other hand, we take Fancy for that Power or Ability of the Mind, which ſuggeſts appoſite and pertinent Expreſſions, and handſome Ways of cloathing and ſetting off thoſe Truths, which the Judgment has rationally pitched upon, it will be found full as uſeful, as any of all the Three mentioned by us, in the Work of Preaching; and conſequently ſlighted and diſapproved of by none but ſuch as envy that in others, which they are never like to be envyed for the Want of in themſelves. He therefore, who thinks to *be a Scribe inſtructed*

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structed for the Kingdom of Heaven, without a Competency of *Judgment*, *Memory*, and *Invention*, attempts a great *Superstructure*, where there is no *Foundation*; and this, surely, is a very prepostrous Way to *edify* either himself or others.

And thus much for the first of the two Qualifications of our Evangelical Scribe; to wit, a tolerable Ability, or Strength of the Powers, and *Faculties* of the Mind; particularly of those three, *Judgment*, *Memory*, and *Invention*. I proceed now to the other, and

2*d Qualification*. Which was an *Habitual Preparation* by Study, Exercise, and due Improvement of the same. Powers act but weakly and irregularly, till they are heightened and perfected by their Habits. A well radicated Habit, in a lively, vegete *Faculty*, is like an *Apple of Gold* in a Picture of Silver; 'tis Perfection upon Perfection, 'tis a Coat of Mail upon our Armour, and, in a Word, it is the Raising the Soul, at least, one Story higher. For take off but these Wheels, and the Powers in all their Operations will drive but heavily. Now it is not enough to have Books, or for a Man to have his Divinity in his Pocket, or upon the Shelf; but he must

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have mastered his Notions, till they even incorporate into his Mind, so as to be able to produce, and wield them upon all Occasions; and not when a Difficulty is proposed, and a Performance enjoined, to say, That he will consult such and such Authors. For this is not to be a Divine, who is rather to be a *walking Library*, than a *walking Index*. As to go no farther than the Similitude in the Text, we should not account him a good or generous House-Keeper, who should not have always something of standing Provision by him, so as never to be so surprized, but that he should still be found able to *treat* his Friend at least, though perhaps not always presently *to feast him*. So the Scribe here spoken of should have an inward, lasting Fulness and Sufficiency, to support and bear him up; especially where present Performance urges, and actual Preparation can be but short. Thus, it is not the Oil in the *Wick*, but in the *Vessel*, which must feed the *Lamp*. The former indeed may cause a *present Blaze*, but it is the latter which must *give it a lasting Light*. It is not the spending Money a Man has in his Pocket, but his Hoards in the Chest, or in the Bank, which must make him rich. A dying Man has

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has his Breath in his Noſtrils, but to have it in the Lungs is that which muſt preſerve Life. Nor will it ſuffice to have raked up a few Notions here and there, or to rally up all one's little Utmoſt into one Diſcourſe, which can conſtitute a Divine, or give a Man Stock enough to ſet up with; any more than a Soldier who had filled his Snapſack, ſhould thereupon ſet up for keeping Houſe. No; a Man would then quickly be drained, his ſhort Stock would ſerve but for one Meeting in ordinary Converſe, and he would be in Danger of meeting with the ſame Company twice. And therefore there muſt be Store, Plenty, and a Treaſure, leſt he turn Broker in Divinity, and having run the Rounds of a beaten exhauſted *Common Place*, be forced to ſtand ſtill, or go the ſame Round over again; pretending to his Auditors, that it is profitable for them to hear the ſame Truths often inculcated to them; though, I humbly conceive, that to inculcate the ſame Truths, is not of neceſſity to repeat *the ſame Words*. And therefore to avoid ſuch beggarly Pretences, there muſt be an Habitual Preparation as to the Work we are now ſpeaking of. And that in two reſpects.

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1. In respect of the *Generality* of *Knowledge* required to it. The Truth is, if we consider that great Multitude of Things to be known, and the Labour and Time required to the Knowledge of each Particular, it is enough to discourage and dash all Attempt, and cause a careless Despair. What *Hippocrates* said of the Cure of the Body, is much truer of the Cure of the Soul, *That Life is short, and Art long.* And I might add also, that the Mind is weak and narrow, and the Business difficult and large. And should I say, that Preaching was the least Part of a Divine, it would I believe be thought a bold Word, and look like a Paradox, (as the World goes) but perhaps, for all that, never the further from being a great Truth. For is it not a greater Thing, to untye the Knots of many intricate and perplexing Controversies? And to bring together all the Ends of a loose, and hardly cohering Hypothesis? To refute the Opinions, and stop the Mouths of Gainsayers, whereas some of them are so opposite amongst themselves, that you can hardly confute one, but with Arguments taken from the other, though both of them equally erroneous? In which and the like Cases to carry an Argument for

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for the Defence of Truth ſo warily and exactly, that an Adverſary ſhall not ſometimes be able to pervert it to the Support of an Error (ſince though the Argument may be materially the ſame, yet the different Application and Management of it may produce quite different Inferences from it.) This, no doubt, is a Matter of great Difficulty, and no leſs Dexterity. And the like alſo may be ſaid of Caſuiſtical Divinity for reſolving *Caſes of Conſcience*; eſpecially where ſeveral Obligations ſeem to interfere and (as it were) juſtle one another, ſo that it ſeems impoſſible to the Conſcience to turn either Way without Sin, and while it does ſo, muſt needs be held under great Diſtraction. To clear a Way out of which, being a Work certainly depending upon much Knowledge of the *Canon and Civil Laws*, as well as of the Principles of Divinity, it muſt needs require much Toil and Labour for the Caſuiſt to provide himſelf with Materials for this Purpoſe, and then no leſs Art and Skill to manage and apply them to the Conſcience. And as it is highly requiſite, that this ſhould in ſome Meaſure be found in every Divine, and in its Height and Perfection

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fection in ſome, which ſince it cannot well be, but by the whole Employment of a Man's Time, not took off or diverted by other Miniſterial Buſineſs, it ſo far ſhews the happy Conſtitution of ſuch Churches, as afford Place of ſuitable Scholaſtick Maintenance (without the Trouble of a Paſtoral Charge) for ſuch, whoſe Abilities carry them to the Study of the *Controverſial*, or *Critical Part* of Theology, rather than any other belonging to the Miniſtry. But on the contrary, where there is no ſuch proper Maintenance allotted for a Divine, but by Preaching only; let us ſuppoſe, that which in ſuch a Caſe we eaſily may. That one had a peculiar Inclination to Controverſy, or to dive into Antiquity, or to ſearch critically into the original Letter of the Scriptures; and withall had little Inclination, and perhaps leſs Ability to preach, but yet knew no other Way to live as a Divine, but by Preaching; do we not here loſe an excellent Caſuiſt, an accurate Critick, or profound School-Divine, only to make a very mean Preacher? Who, had he had the forementioned Opportunity of Encouragement, might have been eminently ſerviceable to the Church in any of thoſe other

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other Ways, while he only serves the natural Necessities of Life in this. And this has been observed by a Learned Knight, to have been an Inconvenience even in those Days, when the Revenues of the Church were not wholly *reformed* from it; that for our not then setting aside whole Societies for the managing of Controversies and nothing else, as the Church of *Rome* finds it necessary to do, Divines for the most part handle Controversies only as a Diversion in the midst of their other Pastoral Labours, and many of them have performed it accordingly. For as Man's Faculties will not suffice *him* for all Arts and Sciences, so neither will they sometimes reach all the Parts and Difficulties of any one of them. But the late Times made the Matter yet ten Times worse with us, when the *Rooters* and *Through-Reformers* made clean Work with the Church, and took away all, and so by stripping the Clergy of their Rights and Preferments, left us in a fair Posture (you may be sure) both *Offensive* and *Defensive*, to encounter our Acute, and Learned Adversaries the *Jesuites*. For then the Polemicks of the *Field* had quite silenced those of the *Schools*. All being took

. *Sir* Edwyn Sandys *in his* Europæ Speculum.

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took up and busied, some in Pulpits, and some in Tubs, in the grand Work of Preaching, and holding forth, and that of *Edification* (as the Word then went) so that they seemed like an Army of Men armed only with *Trowels*, and perhaps amongst Thousands only a *Saul* and a *Jonathan* with *Swords* in their Hands, only one or two with Scholastick Artillery, and Preparation for Controversy. But this by the way, and as a sad Instance to shew how fatal it is, that when Divinity takes in so large a Compass of Learning, and that for so many Uses, the Church should be robbed of the proper, and most effectual Means of stocking herself with it.

But some perhaps will reply; what needs all this? we are resolved to preach only, and look no further, and for this much *Reading* cannot be requisite, except only, for the *Delivery of our Sermons.* For we will *preach our own Experiences.* To which I answer. That be this as it may; but yet, if these Men preach their own Experiences (as they call them) without some other sort of *Reading* and Knowledge, both their Hearers, and themselves too, will quickly have more than sufficient *Experience* of their Confidence, and ridiculous

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ridiculous Impertinence. But as there are certain Mountebanks and Quacks in Phyſick, ſo there are much the ſame alſo in Divinity, ſuch as have only two or three little Experiments, and popular Harangues to entertain and amuſe the Vulgar with; but being wholly unacquainted with the ſolid Grounds and Rules of Science, from whence alone come true Sufficiency and Skill, they are pitifully ignorant and uſeleſs as to any great and worthy Purpoſes; and fit for little elſe, but to ſhew the World how eaſily *Fools* may be impoſed upon by *Knaves*. And thus much for *Habitual Preparation* in Point of *Knowledge*; beſides which, there is required alſo in the

2*d* Place, The like *Preparation as to ſignificant Speech and Expreſſion*. For as I ſhew, that by *Knowledge* a Man informs himſelf, ſo by *Expreſſion* he conveys that Knowledge to others; and as bare Words convey, ſo the Propriety and Elegancy of them gives Force and Facility to the Conveyance. But becauſe this is like to have more Oppoſers; eſpecially ſuch as call a Speaking coherently upon any Sacred Subject, *a Blending of Man's Wiſdom with the Word, an Offering of ſtrange Fire*; and account the Being *Pertinent*, even the

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the next Door to the Being *Profane*, I say, for their Sakes, I shall prove a Thing clear in its self by Scripture, and that not by Arguments, or Consequences drawn from thence, but by down-right Instances occurring in it, and those so very plain, that even such as themselves cannot be ignorant of them. For in God's Word we have not only a Body of *Religion*, but also a System of the best *Rhetorick*: And as the highest Things require the highest Expressions, so we shall find nothing in Scripture so sublime in itself, but it is reached, and sometimes overtopp'd by the Sublimity of the Expression. And first, where did Majesty ever ride in more Splendor, than in those Descriptions of the Divine Power in *Job*, in the xxxviiith, xxxixth, and xlth Chapters. And what Triumph was ever celebrated with higher, livelier, and more exalted Poetry, than in the Song of *Moses*, in xxxii. *Deut.* And then for the Passions of the Soul; which being Things of the highest Transport, and most wonderful and various Operation in humane Nature, are therefore the proper Object and Business of Rhetorick. Let us take a View how the Scripture expresses the most noted and powerful of them. And here, what

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what Poetry ever parallelled *Solomon* in his Deſcription of Love, as to all the Ways, Effects, and Extaſies, and little Tyrannies of that commanding Paſſion? See *Ovid* with his *omnia vincit amor*, &c. And *Virgil* with his *vulnus alit venis & cæco carpitur igne*, &c. How jejune and thin are they to the Poetry of *Solomon*, in the viiith Chapter of the *Canticles*, and the 6th *Verſe*; *Love is ſtrong as Death, and Jealouſy cruel as the Grave.* And as for his Deſcription of Beauty, he deſcribes that ſo, that he even tranſcribes it into his Expreſſions. And where do we read ſuch ſtrange Riſings and Fallings, now the Faintings and Languiſhings, now the Terrors and Aſtoniſhments of *Deſpair* venting themſelves in ſuch high, amazing Strains, as in lxxvii. *Pſal.* Or where did we ever find Sorrow flowing forth in ſuch a natural prevailing *Pathos*, as in the *Lamentations* of *Jeremy*? One would think, that every Letter was wrote with a Tear, every Word was the Noiſe of a breaking Heart; that the Author was a Man compacted of Sorrows; diſciplined to Grief from his Infancy; one who never breathed but in Sighs, nor ſpoke but in a Groan. So that he, who ſaid he would not read the Scripture *for fear of ſpoiling his Style*,

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Style, shewed himself as much a Blockhead, as an Atheist, and to have as small a Gust of the Elegancies of Expression, as of the Sacredness of the Matter. And shall we now think, that the Scripture forbids all Ornament of Speech, and engages Men to be dull, flat, and slovenly in all their Discourses? But let us look a little farther, and see whether the New Testament abrogates what we see so frequently used in the Old? And for this, what mean all the Parables used by our Saviour, the known and greatest Elegancies of Speech? so that if this Way was unlawful before, Christ by His Example has authorized and sanctified it since, and if good and lawful, has confirmed it. But as for the Men whom we contend with; I see not why they should exterminate all Rhetorick, who still treat of Things figuratively, and by the worst of Figures too, their whole Discourse being one continued *Meiosis* to diminish, lessen, and debase the great Things of the Gospel infinitely below themselves. Besides that I need not go beyond the very Words of the Text for an impregnable Proof of this: For Christ says, that a *Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven ought*

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to bring out of his Treasure Things new and old. Now I demand, What are the Things here to be understood? For as to the Matter, which he is here to treat of, the Articles of the Christian Religion are and still must be the same, and therefore there can be no such Variety *as New and Old* in them. Wherefore it remains, that this Variety can be only in the Way of expressing those Things. Besides that our Saviour Christ, in these Words, particularly relates to the Manner of His own Preaching, upon Occasion of the very Sermon, which we find all along this Chapter delivered in Parables; so that by *New and Old* may probably be meant nothing else, but a Plenty, or fluent Dexterity of the most suitable Words, and pregnant Arguments, to set off and enforce Gospel-Truths. For questionless, when Christ says, that a *Scribe* must be stocked with *Things new and old*, we must not think that He meant, that he should have *an Hoard of old Sermons* (whosoever made them,) with a *Bundle of new Opinions*; for this certainly would have furnished out such Entertainment to his Spiritual Guests, as no rightly-disposed *Palate* could ever relish, or *Stomach* bear. And therefore, the Thing which Christ

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here drives at, must needs be only Variety and Copiousness of Sacred Eloquence.

And thus much for the first of the three General Heads proposed by us for the handling these Words; which was to shew, the Qualifications necessary for a *Gospel-Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven.* And these were Two; first, *Habitual Preparation,* in point of Learning or Knowledge; and secondly, The other in point of significant Speech or Expression: I proceed now to the

2*d* General Head proposed, Which was, to assign the Reasons of this their Necessity; and these shall be Three.

1. Because the Preacher works upon Mens Minds only as *a Moral Agent,* and as one, who can do no more than persuade, and not by any Physical Efficiency. And herein I do not say, that *Conversion* is caused only by *Moral Suasion:* For if we consider the Strength of our Corruption, and how it has insinuated itself into the very Principles of Nature, and seized upon those Powers, which are but very little under the Command of the Intellectual Part, I think, it cannot be subdued by meer *Suasion,* which in its utmost reaches only to the convincing of

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of that: But the Heart muſt be changed by a much higher Power, even by an immediate Omnipotent Work of God's Spirit infuſing a Quality into the Soul, not there before, which by Degrees ſhall weaken, and work out our inherent Natural Corruption: And this being a Creating Work, is done ſolely and immediately by God Himſelf; foraſmuch as Creation admits of no Inſtrument, as being an Effect of that infinite Creative Power, which cannot be conveyed to an Inſtrumental Agent.

But you will ſay then, if Converſion be the ſole immediate Work of God, what need *is* there of a Preacher? And how *can he* be ſaid to be, as uſually he is, God's Inſtrument in the Work of a Man's Converſion? To which I anſwer; 1*ſt*, That *God's Inſtitution of Preaching* is a ſufficient Reaſon for it, though we knew no other. 2*dly*, That when the Preacher is ſaid to be an *Inſtrument* in the Converſion of a Sinner, it is not meant, that he is ſuch, by a properly Phyſical Efficiency, but only *Morally*, and by *Perſuaſion*. I explain my Meaning thus. A *Phyſical Inſtrument*, or ſuch as is found in natural Efficient Productions, is that, which partaking of the Power, Force,

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and Cauſality of the principal Agent from thence derived to it, produces a ſuitable Effect. As when I cut or divide a Thing, the Force of my Hand is conveyed to the Knife, by vertue of which, the Knife cuts or divides. And thus, I ſay, the Preacher cannot be the Inſtrument of Converſion, for the Reaſon abovementioned, becauſe that infinite Power, which *does convert*, cannot be conveyed to any finite Being whatſoever. But a *Moral Inſtrument* is quite of another Nature; and is that (as I may ſo expreſs it) *Non quo producente, ſed quo interveniente ſequitur effectus.* Not that, which Converſion is effected by, but that without which (ordinarily at leaſt) it is not. So that while the Miniſter is preaching and *perſuading*, God puts forth another *ſecret Influence*, quite different from that of the Preacher, though ſtill going along with it: And it is this, by which God immediately touches the Sinner's Heart, and converts him. Howbeit, the Preacher is ſtill ſaid to be Inſtrumental in this great Work; foraſmuch as his Preaching is ſubordinate to, and moſt commonly (as has been ſaid) accompanies it: God not being pleaſed to exert His Action, but in Concurrence with the Preacher exerting his.

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And thus having given God His Prerogative, and the Preacher his Due, by shewing, how he is Morally Instrumental to the Work of the Sinner's Conversion by *persuading*; I inferr the Necessity of those forementioned Abilities and *Preparations* for Preaching, as being the most proper Means and Instruments of *Persuasion*. See this exemplified in St. *Paul* himself, and in him observe, when he deals with the *Jews*, how he endeavours to insinuate what he says, by pleading his own *Kindred* with them, speaking honourably of *Abraham*, and of the Law, and calling the Gospel *the Law of Faith*; and affirming, that it did *establish the Law*. All which was the true Art of natural Rhetorick, thus to convey his Sense under those Names and Notions, which he knew were highly pleasing to them. But then, on the other hand, when he would win over the *Gentiles*; forasmuch as there was a standing Fewd between them and the *Jews*; (the *Jews*, like the Men here of late, for ever unsainting all the World, besides themselves;) observe how he deals with them. He tells them of the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* being ingrafted in their Room. And that *Abraham believed* unto

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Juſtification before he was *circumciſed*, and therefore was no leſs the Father of the *uncircumciſed* Believers, than of the circumciſed. He tells them alſo, that the believing *Gentiles* were his *Spiritual Seed*, but the *Jews*, as ſuch, were only his *Carnal*. He takes Occaſion alſo to undervalue Circumciſion, and the Ceremonial Law, as abuſed by the *Jews*, and in themſelves Things moſt hateful to other Nations. Now all this was hugely pleaſing to the *Gentiles*, and therefore very apt to perſuade. But had not St. *Paul* been a Man of Learning and Skill in the Art and Methods of Rhetorick, he could not have ſuited ſuch Appoſite Exhortations to ſuch different Sorts of Men with ſo much Dexterity. And the ſame Courſe in dealing with Mens Minds, is a Miniſter of the Word to take now. As ſuppoſe, he would diſſuade Men from any Vice, he is to found his Diſſuaſives upon the peculiar Temper of the Man; ſo that, if, for Inſtance, he ſhould find it needful to preach againſt Drunkenneſs, and there were ſeveral in the Congregation addicted to ſeveral Sorts of Vice, as ſome to Pride or Ambition, ſome to Covetouſneſs, or the like; here, beſides the general Argument from the Puniſhments of

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of the other World denounced against these, and such other Vices; if he would do his Business effectually, he must also tell the *ambitious or proud Man*, that his Drunkenness would *disgrace* him, and make him the Scorn and Contempt of all the World about him; and the *covetous Man*, that it would certainly waste his Estate, and *beggar him*. Whereas should he, on the other hand, transplace these Arguments, and dissuade him who is proud from drinking, because it would beggar him, and him who is covetous, because it would disgrace him, doubtless he would prevail but little, because his Argument would not strike that proper Principle which each of them were governed by. And now what can this be grounded upon, but upon natural Philosophy, and a Knowledge of Mens Passions and Interests, the great and chief Springs of all their Actions? And upon the like Ground it is, that for a Preacher in his Discourses to the People to insist only upon Universals, is but a cold, faint, languid Way of Persuading or Dissuading; as to tell Men in general, that they are Sinners, and that going on in Sin without Repentance, they are under the Curse and Wrath of God; all which they

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think they knew before, and accordingly receive it as a Word of Courſe, and too ſlightly regard it; but Conviction, the uſual Fore-runner of, and Preparative to *Converſion*, is from Particulars, as if the Preacher ſhould tell his Hearers, that he who continues to cheat, cozen, and equivocate, is a wicked and impenitent Wretch: And that he who drinks, and ſwears, and whores, is the Perſon to whom the Curſe directly belongs; and this ſeriouſly urged, and diſcreetly applyed, will, if any Thing, carry it Home to the Conſcience, and lodge it there too: And now is not the Reaſon of this Method alſo to be fetched from Philoſophy, as well as from Religion? For we know, that Men naturally have only a weak, confuſed Knowledge of Univerſals, but a clear and lively Idea of Particulars. And that which gives a clear Repreſentation of a Thing to the *Apprehenſion*, makes a ſuitable *Impreſſion of it* upon the Will and Affections. Whoſoever therefore pretends to be a Preacher, muſt know, that his main Buſineſs is to *perſuade*, and that without the Helps of humane Learning, this can hardly be done to any Purpoſe. So that if he finds himſelf wholly deſtitute of theſe,

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and has nothing elſe to truſt to, but ſome groundleſs, windy, and phantaſtick Notions about *the Spirit* (the common Sanctuary of Fanaticks and Enthuſiaſts) he would do well to *look back*, and taking his *Hand* off from this *Plough*, to put it to another, much fitter for him. But in the mean time, as for ourſelves, who pretend not to a Pitch above other Mortals, nor dare rely upon Inſpiration inſtead of Induſtry, we muſt reſt content, to revere the Wiſdom, and follow the Examples of thoſe who went before us, and enjoined us the Study of the Arts and Sciences, as the ſureſt and moſt tryed Way to *that of Divinity.*

2. A ſecond Reaſon for the Neceſſity of theſe Preparations for the Miniſtry, ſhall be taken from this Conſideration; That at the firſt Promulgation of the Goſpel, God was pleaſed to furniſh the Apoſtles and Preachers of it with Abilities proper for that great Work, after a ſupernatural and miraculous Way. For ſtill we find, that the Scripture repreſents the Apoſtles as *ignorant* and *illiterate Men*, and that the *Chief Prieſts* and *Elders of the Jews* took particular Notice of them, as ſuch, in *Act.* iv. and the 13th *Verſe*. The Text there giving them this Character,

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Character, that they were ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι, καὶ ἰδιῶται, that is to say, according to the strict Signification of the Word, Men unlearned, and of a mean and plebeian Condition. Nevertheless, since they were appointed by God to preach the Gospel to several Nations; a Work requiring a considerable Knowledge of the Languages of those Nations, and impossible to be performed without it, and yet no less impossible for the Apostles, having neither Time, nor Opportunity to acquire that Knowledge in the natural, ordinary Course of Study, God Himself supplies this Defect, and endues them with all necessary Qualifications by immediate and divine Infusion. So that *being filled with the Holy Ghost*, as we read in *Act.* ii. and the 4th *Verse*, *they forthwith spoke with other Tongues*; and that so clearly, plainly, and intelligibly, as both to convince, and astonish all who heard them; even those of the most different Nations and Languages, as well as their own Countrymen the *Jews* themselves. From whence I thus argue: That if the forementioned Helps and Assistances were not always of most singular Use, and sometimes of indispensable Necessity to the Calling of a Divine, certainly the most

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most wise God would never have been at the Expence of a Miracle, to endow Men, of that Calling, with them. For he who observes that Order and Decorum in all his Works, as never to over-do any Thing, nor carry on the Business of his ordinary Providence, by extraordinary and supernatural Ways, would doubtless (in the Eye of the World at least) seem to debase, and make cheap those noblest Instances of his Power, should he ever exert them, but where he saw it of the highest Concern to his own Honour, and Man's Happiness, that something should be done for both, which bare Nature, *left to itself, could never do.*

3. The third and last Reason for the Necessity of such Preparations for the Ministry, shall be drawn from *the Dignity of the Subject of it*, which is Divinity. And what is Divinity, but a Doctrine treating of the Nature, Attributes, and Works of the Great God, as he stands related to Rational Creatures? And the Way how Rational Creatures may serve, worship, and enjoy him? And if so, is not the Subject Matter of it the greatest, and the Design and Business of it the noblest in the World, as being no less than to direct an

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an immortal Soul to its endleſs and eternal Felicity? It has been diſputed, to which of the Intellectual Habits, mentioned by *Ariſtotle*, it moſt properly belongs; ſome referring it to *Wiſdom*, ſome to *Science*, ſome to *Prudence*, and ſome compounding it of ſeveral of them together; but thoſe ſeem to ſpeak moſt to the Purpoſe, who will not have it *formally* any One of them, but *vertually*, and in an *eminent tranſcendent* Manner *All*. And now can we think, that a Doctrine of that Depth, that Height, and that vaſt Compaſs, graſping within it all the Perfections and Dimenſions of humane Science, does not worthily claim all the Preparations, whereby the Wit and Induſtry of Man can fit him for it? All other Sciences are accounted but Hand-Maids to Divinity, and ſhall the Hand-Maid be richer adorned, and better cloathed, and ſet off, than her Lady? In other Things, the *Art* uſually excells the Matter, and the Ornament we beſtow, is better than the Subject we beſtow it upon. But here we are ſure, that we have ſuch a Subject before us, as not only calls for, but commands, and not only commands, but deſerves our utmoſt Application to it; a Subject of that Native, that Inherent Worth, that

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that it is not capable of any Addition from us, but ſhines both through, and above, all the artificial Luſtre we can put upon it. The Study of Divinity is indeed difficult, and we are to labour hard, and dig deep for it; but then we dig in a *golden Mine*, which equally *invites and rewards* our Labour.

And thus much *for the ſecond General Head* at firſt propoſed, for the handling of the Words; Which was to ſhew, *the Reaſons of the Neceſſity of the Preparations ſpoken of to the Study of Divinity*. Of which we have aſſigned Three.

And ſo we paſs at length to the *third and laſt General Head* propoſed, Which was, to ſhew, *what uſeful Inferences* may be drawn from the foregoing Particulars. And the firſt ſhall be a juſt and ſevere Reproof to two Sorts of Men.

1*ſt*, To ſuch as diſparage, and detract from the Grandeur of the Goſpel, by a puerile and indecent Levity in their Diſcourſes of it to the People.

2*dly*, To ſuch as depreciate, and (as much as in them lies) debaſe the ſame, by a coarſe, careleſs, rude and inſipid Way of handling the great and invaluable Truths of it.

Both

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Both of them certainly Objects of the moſt deſerved Reproof. And

1. For thoſe who diſparage and detract from the Goſpel, by a puerile and indecent Sort of Levity in their Diſcourſes upon it, ſo extremely below the Subject diſcourſed of. All vain, luxuriant Allegories, rhiming *Cadencies* of ſimilary Words, are ſuch pitiful Embelliſhments of Speech, as ſerve for nothing, but to embaſe Divinity; and the Uſe of them, but like the Plaiſtering of Marble, or the Painting of Gold, the Glory of which is to be ſeen, and to ſhine by no other Luſtre but their own. What *Quintilian* moſt diſcreetly ſays of *Seneca*'s handling Philoſophy, that he did *rerum pondera minutiſſimis ſententiis frangere*, break, and (as it were) emaſculate the Weight of his Subject by little affected Sentences, the ſame may with much more Reaſon be applyed to the Practice of thoſe, who detract from the Excellency of Things Sacred by a comical Lightneſs of Expreſſion: As when their Prayers ſhall be ſet out in ſuch a Dreſs, as if they did not ſupplicate, but compliment Almighty God, and their Sermons ſo garniſhed with Quibbles and Trifles, as if they played with Truth and Immortality; and neither

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neither believed theſe Things themſelves, nor were willing that others ſhould. For is it poſſible, that a Man in his Senſes ſhould be merry and jocoſe with eternal Life, and eternal Death, if he really deſigned to ſtrike the awful Impreſſion of either into the Conſciences of Men? No, no; this is no leſs a Contradiction to common Senſe and Reaſon, than to the ſtricteſt Notions of Religion. And as this can by no means be accounted Divinity, ſo neither indeed can it paſs for Wit; which yet ſuch chiefly ſeem to affect in ſuch Performances. For theſe are as much the Stains of true humane Eloquence, as they are the Blots and Blemiſhes of Divinity; and might be as well confuted out of *Quintilian*'s Inſtitutions, as out of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles. Such are wholly miſtaken in the Nature of *Wit*: For *true Wit* is a ſevere and a manly Thing. Wit in Divinity is nothing elſe, but Sacred Truths ſuitably expreſſed. 'Tis not Shreds of *Latin* or *Greek*, nor a *Deus dixit*, and a *Deus benedixit*, nor thoſe little Quirks, or Diviſions into the ὅτι, the διότι, and the καθότι, or the *Egreſs*, *Regreſs*, and *Progreſs*, and other ſuch Stuff (much like the Style of a Leaſe) that can properly be called *Wit*.

For

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For that is not *Wit*, which consists not with *Wisdom*. For can you think, that it had not been an easy Matter for any one, in the Text here pitched upon by me, to have run out into a long, fulsome Allegory, comparing the Scribe and the Housholder together, and now and then to have cast in a Rhyme, with a *Quid*, a *Quo*, and a *Quomodò*, and the like? But certainly it would then have been much more difficult for the Judicious to hear such Things, than for any, if so inclined, to have composed them. The Practice therefore of such Persons is upon no Terms to be endured. Nor,

2. Is the Contrary of it to be at all more endured in those, who cry up their mean, heavy, careless, and insipid Way of handling Things Sacred, as the only Spiritual and Evangelical Way of Preaching, while they charge all their crude Incoherences, sawcy Familiarities with God, and nauseous Tautologies, upon the Spirit prompting such Things to them, and that as the most elevated, and seraphick Heights of Religion. Both these sorts (as I have said) are absolutely to be exploded; and it is hard to judge, which of them deserves it most. 'Tis indeed no ways decent for a

grave

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grave Matron to be attired in the gaudy, flaunting Dress of Youth; but it is not at all uncomely, for such an one to be cloathed in the richest, and most costly Silk, if black or grave. For it is not the *Richness* of the Piece, but the *Gaudiness* of the Colour, which exposes to Censure. And therefore, as I shew before, that the ὅτι's, and the διότι's, the *Deus dixit*, and the *Deus benedixit*, could not be accounted Wit; so neither can the whimsical Cant of *Issues*, *Products*, *Tendencies*, *Breathings*, *Indwellings*, *Rollings*, *Recumbencies*, and Scriptures misapplyed be accounted Divinity. In a word, let but these new Lights (so apt to teach their Betters) instead of all this and the like Jargon, bring us, in their Discourses, Strength of Argument, Clearness of Consequence, Exactness of Method, and Propriety of Speech, and then let Prejudice and Party (whatsoever they may mutter against them) despise and deride them, if they can. But Persons of light, undistinguishing Heads, not able to carry themselves clear between Extremes, think that they must either flutter (as it were) in the Air, by a kind of vain,

Terms often and much used by one J. O. *a great Leader and Oracle in those Times.*

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empty Lightneſs, or lie groveling upon the Ground, by a dead and contemptible Flatneſs; both the one and the other, no doubt, equally ridiculous. But after all, I cannot but believe, that it is the bewitching Eaſineſs of the latter Way of the two, which chiefly ſanctifies and endears it to the Practice of theſe Men; and I hope it will not prove offenſive to the Auditory, if, to releaſe it (could I be ſo happy) from ſuffering by ſuch Stuff for the future, I venture upon ſome ſhort Deſcription of it; and it is briefly thus. Firſt of all they ſeize upon ſome Text, from whence they draw ſomething, (which they call a *Doctrine*) and well may it be ſaid to be *drawn* from the Words; foraſmuch as it ſeldom naturally flows, or *reſults* from them. In the next place, being thus provided, they branch it into ſeveral Heads; perhaps twenty, or thirty, or upwards. Whereupon, for the Proſecution of theſe, they repair to ſome *truſty Concordance*, which never fails them, and by the Help of that, they range ſix or ſeven Scriptures under each Head; which Scriptures they proſecute one by one; firſt amplifying and enlarging upon one, for ſome conſiderable Time, till they have ſpoiled it; and

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and then that being done, they pass to another, which, in its Turn, suffers accordingly. And these impertinent, and unpremeditated Enlargements they look upon as *the Motions and Breathings of the Spirit*, and therefore much beyond those *carnal Ordinances of Sense and Reason*, supported by Industry and Study; and this they call a *saving Way* of Preaching, as it must be confessed to be a Way to save much Labour, and nothing else that I know of. But how Men should thus come to make the Salvation of an immortal Soul, such a slight, *extempore* Business, I must profess, I cannot understand; and would gladly understand upon whose Example they ground this Way of Preaching; not upon that of the Apostles I am sure. For it is said, of St. *Paul* in his Sermon before *Felix*, *That he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come.* The Words being in *Act.* xxiv. 25. διαλεγομένε δὲ αὐτε, and according to the natural Force and Import of them, signifying, that he discoursed, or reasoned dialectically, following one Conclusion with another, and with the most close and pressing Arguments from the most persuasive Topicks of Reason and Divinity. Whereupon we quickly find the Prevalence

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of his Preaching in a suitable Effect, *That* Fœlix *trembled.* Whereas had *Paul* only *cast about his Arms, spoke himself hoarse, and cryed, You are damned,* though *Fœlix* (as guilty as he was) might have given him the Hearing, yet possibly he might also have looked upon him as one whose Passion had, at that Time, got the start of his Judgment, and accordingly have given him the same coarse Salute, which the same *Paul* afterwards, so undeservedly, met with from *Festus*; but his Zeal was too much under the Conduct of his Reason, to fly out at such a rate. But to pass from these Indecencies to others, as little to be allowed in this Sort of Men, can any tolerable Reason be given for those strange new Postures used by some in the Delivery of the Word? Such as *shutting the Eyes, distorting the Face, and speaking through the Nose,* which I think cannot so properly be called *Preaching,* as *Toning of a Sermon.* Nor do I see, why *the Word* may not be altogether as effectual for *the Conversion of Souls,* delivered by one, who has the Manners to look his Auditory in the Face, using his own Countenance, and his own native Voice without straining it to a lamentable and doleful *Whine,*

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Whine, (never ſerving to any Purpoſe, but where ſome religious Cheat is to be carried on.) That ancient, though ſeemingly odd Saying, *Loquere ut te videam*, in my poor Judgment carries in it a very notable Inſtruction, and peculiarly applicable to the Perſons and Matter here pointed at. For, ſuppoſing one to be a very able and excellent *Speaker*, yet under the forementioned Circumſtances, he muſt, however, needs *be a very ill Sight*; and the Caſe of his poor ſuffering Hearers very ſevere upon them, while both the *Matter uttered* by him, ſhall grate hard *upon the Ear*, and the Perſon uttering it, at the ſame Time *equally offend the Eye*. It is clear therefore, that the Men of this Method have ſullyed the noble Science of Divinity, and can never warrant their Practice, either from Religion or Reaſon, or the Rules of decent and good Behaviour, nor yet from the Example of the Apoſtles, and leaſt of all from that of our Saviour Himſelf. For none ſurely will imagine, *that theſe Mens Speaking, as never Man ſpoke before*, can paſs for any *Imitation of Him*. And here, I humbly conceive, that it may not be amiſs to take Occaſion to utter a great Truth, as both worthy to be now conſidered, and never

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to be forgot: Namely, That if we reflect upon the late Times of Confusion, which passed upon the Ministry, we shall find, that the grand Design of the Fanatick Crew was to persuade the World, That a standing, settled Ministry was wholly useless. This, I say, was the main Point which they then drove at. And the great Engine to effect this, was by engaging Men of several Callings (and those the meaner still the better) to hold forth, and harangue the Multitude, sometimes in Streets, sometimes in Churches, sometimes in Barns, and sometimes from Pulpits, and sometimes from Tubs. And in a word, whersoever, and howsoever they could clock the senseless and unthinking Rabble about them. And with this Practice well followed, they (and their Friends the *Jesuites*) concluded, that in some Time, it would be no hard Matter to persuade the People, that if Men of other Professions were able to teach and preach the Word, then to what Purpose should there be a Company of Men brought up to it, and maintained in it, at the Charge of a Publick Allowance? Especially, when at the same Time, the *truly Godly* so greedily gaped and grasped at it *for their self-denying Selves*. So that, Preaching,

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ing, we see, was their prime Engine. But now what was it, which encouraged these Men to set up for a Work, which (if duly managed) was so difficult in itself, and which they were never bred to? Why, no doubt it was, that low, cheap, illiterate Way, then commonly used, and cryed up for the only *Gospel*, *Soul-searching Way*, (as the Word then went) and which the craftier Sort of them saw well enough, that with a little Exercise, and much Confidence, they might in a short Time come to equal, if not exceed; as it cannot be denyed, but that some few of them (with the Help of a few Friends *in masquerade*) accordingly did. But on the contrary, had Preaching been made, and reckoned a Matter of solid and true Learning, of Theological Knowledge, and long, and severe Study, (as the Nature of it required it to be) assuredly, no *preaching Cobbler* amongst them all, would ever have ventured *so far beyond his Last*, as to undertake it. And consequently this their most powerful Engine for supplanting the Church and Clergy, had never been attempted, nor perhaps so much as thought on: And therefore, of most singular Benefit, no question, would it be to the *Publick*, if

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those, who have *Authority* to second their *Advice*, would counsel the Ignorant and the Forward, to consider *what* Divinity is, and what they themselves are, and so, to put up their *preaching Tools*, their *Medulla*'s, *Note-books*, their *Mellificiums*, *Concordances*, and all, and betake themselves to some useful Trade, which Nature had most particularly fitted them for. This is what I thought fit to offer and recommend; and that not out of any Humour of Opposition to this or that Sort of Men, (for, whatsoever they may deserve, I think them below it) but out of a dutiful Zeal for the Advancement of what most of us profess, *Divinity*; as likewise for the *Honour* of that Place, which we belong to, *the University*; and which of late Years I have (with no small Sorrow) heard often reflected upon, for the Meanness of many Performances in it, no ways answerable to the ancient Reputation of so noble a Seat of Knowledge. For let the Enemies of *that* and *us* say what they will, no Man's *Dulness* is, or can be his Duty, and much less his Perfection.

And thus having considered the two different, or rather contrary Ways of handling the Word, and most justly rejected them both,

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both, I ſhall now briefly give the Reaſons of our Rejection of them, and theſe ſhall be Two.

1*ſt*, Becauſe both theſe Ways, to wit, the *Light and Comical*, and the *Dull and Heavy*, extremely expoſe and diſcredit the Ordinance of Preaching: And

2*dly*, Becauſe they no leſs *diſgrace the Church* itſelf.

1. And firſt, we ſhall find how much both of them expoſe and diſcredit the Ordinance of Preaching; even that Ordinance which was originally deſigned for the two greateſt Things in the World; *The Honour of God*, and the *Converſion of Souls*. For if to convert a Soul, even by the Word itſelf, and the ſtrongeſt Arguments which the Reaſon of Man can bring, (as being no more than *Inſtruments*, or rather meer *Conditions* in the Caſe) if, I ſay, this be reckoned a Work *above Nature* (as it really is) then ſurely to convert one by a *Jeſt* would be a Reach beyond a *Miracle*. In ſhort, it is this unhallowed Way of Preaching, which turns the Pulpit into a Stage, and the moſt Sovereign Remedy againſt Sin, and Preſervative of the Soul, *into the Sacrifice of Fools*; making it a Matter of Sport to the Light and Vain, of

Pity

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Pity to the Sober and Devout, and of Scorn and Loathing to all: And I believe never yet drew a *Tear* or a *Sigh* from any judicious and well-disposed Auditor, unless perhaps for the Sin and Vanity of the Speaker: So sad a Thing it is, when Sermons shall be such, that the most serious Hearer of them shall not be able to command or keep fixed his *Attention and his Countenance too.* For can it be imagined excusable, or indeed tolerable, for one, who owns himself for *God's Ambassador* to the People, to speak those Things, as by his Authority, of which it is hard to judge whether they detract from the Honour or Honesty of an Ambassador most. But in a word, when the professed Dispensers of the weighty Matters of Religion shall treat them in a Way, so utterly unsuitable to the Weight and Grandeur of them, do they not come too near the infamous Example of *Eli*'s two Sons, who managed their Priestly Office (as high and sacred as it was) in so wretched a Manner, that it is said in 1 *Sam.* ii. 27. *That the People abhorred the Offering of the Lord*; and, if so, we may be sure, that they abhorred *the Offerers* much more.

2*dly*, As the two forementioned Ways of handling the Word, *viz. The Light and Comical*,

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mical, and the *Heavy and Dull*, do mightily discredit the great Ordinance of Preaching, so they equally discredit the Church itself. It is the unhappy Fate of the Clergy above all Men, that their Failures and Defects never terminate in their own Persons, but still redound upon their Function; a manifest Injustice certainly; where one is *the Criminal*, and another must be *the Sufferer*: But yet as bad as it is, from the Practice of some Persons, *to take Occasion* to reproach the Church; so on the other side, *to give the Occasion*, is undoubtedly much worse. And therefore, whatsoever Relation to, or whatsoever Interest in, or Affection to the Church, such may, or do pretend to; they are really greater Enemies, and fouler Blots, to her excellent Constitution, than the most avowed Opposers and Maligners of it; and consequently would have disobliged her infinitely less, had they fallen in with the Schismaticks and Fanaticks in their bittereſt *Invectives* against her; and that even to the *renouncing her Orders* (as some of them have done) and an entire quitting of her Communion besides; the greatest Kindness that such could possibly have done her. For better it is, to be hissed at by a Snake out of the *Hedge or the Dunghill*,

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hill, than to be hiſſed at, and bitten too by one in one's *own Boſom*. But I truſt, that when Men ſhall ſeriouſly and impartially conſider, how, and from whence the Church's Enemies have took *Advantage* againſt her, there will be found thoſe, whoſe *Preaching* ſhall both anſwer and adorn her *Conſtitution*, and withall, make her excellent *Inſtructions* from the *Pulpit*, ſo to *ſuit*, as well as *ſecond* her imcomparable *Devotions* from the *Desk*, that they ſhall neither fly out into thoſe Levities and Indecencies (ſo juſtly before condemned) on the one hand; nor yet ſink into that ſordid, ſupine Dulneſs on the other (which our Men of the Spirit ſo much affect to diſtinguiſh themſelves by, and which we, by no means, deſire to vye with them in.) In ſum, we hope, that all our Church-Performances ſhall be ſuch, that ſhe ſhall as much out-ſhine all thoſe about her, in the Soundneſs and Sobriety of her Doctrines, as ſhe ſurpaſſes them all in the Primitive Excellency of her Diſcipline.

And thus having finiſhed the firſt of the two General Inferences from the foregoing Particulars, which was for the Reproof of two contrary Sorts of Diſpenſers of the Word; and given Reaſons againſt them both; I ſhall now in the 2*d* Place,

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2*d* Place, paſs to the other and concluding Inference from this whole Diſcourſe; and that ſhall be to exhort and adviſe thoſe who have already heard what Preparations are required to a *Goſpel-Scribe inſtructed to the Kingdom of Heaven*, and who withall deſign themſelves for the ſame Employment, with the utmoſt Seriouſneſs of Thought to conſider the high Reaſonableneſs, or rather abſolute Neceſſity of their beſtowing a competent and ſufficient Time in the Univerſities for that Purpoſe. And to diſſuade ſuch from a ſudden and haſty Relinquiſhment of them, (beſides Arguments, more than enough, drawn from the great Inconveniencies of ſo doing, and the implicit Prohibition of St. *Paul* himſelf, declaring, *That he who undertakes a Paſtoral Charge, muſt not be a Novice*) there is ſtill a more cogent Reaſon for the ſame, and that from the very Nature of the Thing itſelf: For how (naturally ſpeaking) can there be a Fitneſs for any great Thing or Work, without Preparation? And how can there be Preparation, without due Time and Opportunity? It is obſerved of the *Levites*, though much of their Miniſtry was only *Shoulder-work*, that they had yet a very conſiderable Time for Preparation. They

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They were consecrated to it, by the Imposition of Hands *at the Age of five and twenty*; after which they employed *five Years* in learning their Office, and then at the *thirtieth Year of their Age*, they began their *Levitical* Ministration; at which time also our Blessed Saviour began his Ministry. But now under the Gospel, when our Work is ten Times greater, (as well as twice ten Times more Spiritual than theirs was) do we think to furnish ourselves in half the Space? There was lately a Company of Men called *Tryers*, commissioned by *Cromwell*, to judge of the Abilities of such as were to be admitted by them into the Ministry. Who (forsooth) if any of *that* Levitical *Age of Thirty*, presented himself to them for *their Approbation*, they commonly rejected him with Scorn and Disdain; telling him, that if he had not been *Lukewarm*, and good for nothing, he would have been disposed of in the Ministry long before; and they would tell him also, that he was not only of *a Legal Age*, but *of a Legal Spirit* too; and as for Things *Legal*, (by which we poor Mortals, *and Men of the Letter*, and not of the Spirit) understand Things *done according to Law*) This they renounced, and pretended to be many Degrees

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grees above it; for otherwiſe we may be ſure, that their great Maſter of Miſ-rule *Oliver* would never have commiſſioned them to ſerve him in that Poſt. And now what a Kind of Miniſtry (may we imagine) ſuch would have ſtocked this poor Nation with, in the Space of ten Years more? But the Truth is, for thoſe, whoſe Divinity was *Novelty*, it ought to be no Wonder, if their Divines were to be Novices too; and ſince they intended to make their *Preaching* and Praying an *Extemporary Work*, no wonder if they were contented alſo with an *Extemporary Preparation*, and after two or three Years ſpent in the Univerſity, ran Abroad, under a Pretence *of ſerving God in their Generation*; (a Term in mighty Requeſt with them) and that for Reaſons ('tis ſuppoſed) beſt known to themſelves. But as for ſuch Muſhroom Divines, who ſtart up ſo of a ſudden, we do not uſually find their Succeſs ſo good, as to recommend their Practice. *Haſty Births* are ſeldom *long-liv'd*, but *never ſtrong*: And therefore I hope, that thoſe who love the Church ſo well, as not to be willing that ſhe ſhould ſuffer by any Failure of theirs, will make it their Buſineſs ſo to ſtock themſelves here, as to carry from hence both Learning and

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and Experience to that arduous and great Work, which ſo eminently requires both. And the more inexcuſable will an over-haſty leaving this noble Place *of Improvement* be, by how much the greater Encouragement we now have to make a longer Stay in it, than we had ſome Years ſince: Providence having broken the Rod of (I believe) as great Spiritual Oppreſſion, as was ever before exerciſed upon any Company or Corporation of Men whatſoever. When ſome Spiritual Tyrants, then at the Top and Head of it, not being able to faſten any Accuſation upon *Mens Lives*, mortally maligned by them, would preſently arraign and paſs Sentence upon their *Hearts*; and deny them the proper Encouragement and Support of Scholars, becauſe (forſooth) they were not (in Their refined Senſe) *Godly and Regenerate*; nor allowed to be *Godly*, becauſe they would not eſpouſe a Faction, by reſorting to their *Congregational, Houſe-warming Meetings*; where the Brotherhood (or *Siſterhood rather*) uſed to be ſo very Kind to *their Friends and Brethren in the Lord.* Beſides the barbarous, raving Inſolence, which thoſe Spiritual Dons from the Pulpit were wont to ſhew to all Sorts and Degrees of Men, high and low; repreſenting

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representing every Casual Mishap, as a Judgment from God upon such and such particular Persons; who being implacably hated by the Party, could not (it seems) be otherwise by God himself. For * *mark the Men*, said Holderforth (as I myself with several others frequently heard him.) And then having thus fixed his *Mark*, and taken *Aim*, he would *shoot through and through it* with a Vengeance. But, I hope, Things are already come to that pass, that we shall never again hear any, especially of our own Body, in the very *Face of Loyalty and Learning*, dare in *this* Place (so renowned for both) either rail at Majesty, or decry a standing Ministry, and in a most unnatural and prepostrous Manner, plant their Batteries in the Pulpit for the beating down of the Church.

* *Dr.* H. W. *violently thrust in Canon of* Christ-Church, Oxon, *by the Parliament-Visiters, in the Year* 1647.

In fine, therefore, both to relieve your Patience, and close up this whole Discourse, since Providence, by a Wonder of Mercy, has now opened a Way for the Return of our Laws, and our Religion, it will concern us all seriously to consider, that as the Work before us, is the greatest and most important, both with reference to this World, and

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the next, so likewise to remember, and lay to Heart, that *this is the Place* of Preparation, *and now the Time of it:* And consequently, that the more Time and Care shall be taken by us, to go from hence prepared for our great Business, the *better* (no doubt) will be our *Work*, and the larger our *Reward.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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A

SERMON

ON

PROVERBS i. 32.

The Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them.

IT is a Thing partly worth our Wonder, partly our Compassion, that what the greatest Part of Men are most passionately desirous of, that they are generally most unfit for: For they look upon Things absolutely in themselves, without examining the Suitableness of them to their own Conditions; and so, at a Distance, court that as an Enjoyment, which upon Experience they find a Plague, and a great Calamity. And this peculiar ill Property has *Folly*, that it widens and enlarges Mens Desires, while it lessens their Capacities. Like a Dropsy,

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which ſtill calls for Drink, but not affording Strength to digeſt it, puts an End to the Drinker, but not the Thirſt.

As for the Explication of the Text, to tell you, that in the Dialect of Scripture, but eſpecially of this Book of the *Proverbs*, *Wicked Men* are called *Fools*, and *Wickedneſs Folly*, as on the contrary, that *Piety* is ſtill graced with the Name of *Wiſdom*, would be as ſuperfluous, as to attempt the Proof of a ſelf-evident and firſt Principle, or to light a Candle to the Sun. By *Fools* therefore are here *repreſented all wicked and vicious Perſons.* Such as turn their Backs upon Reaſon and Religion, and wholly devoting themſelves to Senſuality, follow the Sway and Career of their corrupt Affections.

The Miſery of which Perſons is from hence moſt manifeſt, that, when God gives them what they moſt love, they periſh in the Embraces of it, are cruſhed to Death under Heaps of Gold, ſtifled with an overcoming Plenty; like a Ship fetching rich Commodities from a far Country, but ſinking by the Weight of them in its Return. Since therefore wicked Men are ſo ſtrangely out, in the calculating of their own Intereſt; and account nothing Happineſs, but what brings

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up Death and Deſtruction in the Rear of it; and ſince Proſperity is yet, in itſelf, a real *Bleſſing*, though to them it becomes a Miſchief, and determines in a *Curſe*; it concerns us to look into the Reaſon of this ſtrange Event, and to examine how it comes to paſs, *that the Proſperity of Fools deſtroys them.*

The Reaſons of it I conceive may be theſe Three.

1*ſt*, Becauſe every fooliſh or vicious Perſon is either ignorant or regardleſs of the proper Ends and Uſes, for which God deſigns the *Proſperity* of thoſe, to whom he ſends it.

2*dly*, Becauſe *Proſperity* (as the Nature of Man now ſtands) has a peculiar Force and Fitneſs to abate Mens Vertues, and to heighten their Corruptions. And

3*dly* and *Laſtly*, Becauſe it directly indiſpoſes them to the proper Means of Amendment and Recovery.

1. And firſt for the firſt of theſe, one Reaſon why vicious Perſons miſcarry by *Proſperity*, *is*, *becauſe every ſuch Perſon is either ignorant or regardleſs of the proper Ends and Uſes for which God ordains and deſigns it.* Which Ends are theſe.

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1. To try and discover what is *in a Man*. All Tryal is properly Enquiry, and Enquiry is an Endeavour after the Knowledge of a Thing as yet unknown; and consequently, in Strictness of Speech, God who knows all Things, and can be ignorant of nothing, cannot be said *to Try*, any more than he can be said *to Enquire*. But God, while he speaks to Men, is often pleased to speak after the Manner of Men; and the Reason of this is not only his Condescension to our Capacities, but because in many Actions God behaves himself with some Analogy and Proportion to the Actings of Men. And therefore, because God sometimes sets those Things before Men, that have in them a Fitness to draw forth and discover what is in their Heart, as inquisitive Persons do, who have a Mind to pry into the Thoughts and Actions of their Neighbour, he is upon this Account said *to try* or *to enquire*, though, in Truth, by so doing, God designs not to inform himself, but the Person whom he *tryes*, and to give both him and the World a View of his Temper and Disposition.

For the World is ignorant of Men, till Occasion gives them Power to turn their Inside outward, and to shew themselves. So that

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that what is ſaid of an *Office*, may be alſo ſaid of *Proſperity*, and a *Fortune*, that it does *indicare virum*, diſcover what the Man is, and what Mettal his Heart is made of. We ſee a Slave perhaps cringe, and ſneak, and humble himſelf, but do we therefore preſently think, that we ſee his Nature in his Behaviour? No, we may find ourſelves much miſtaken; for no Body knows, in caſe Providence ſhould think fit to ſmile upon ſuch an one, and (as it were) to launch him forth into a deep, and a wide Fortune, how quickly he would be another Man, aſſume another Spirit, and grow inſolent, imperious, and inſufferable.

Nor is this a Myſtery hid only from the Eyes of the World round about a Man, but ſometimes alſo even from himſelf; for he ſeldom knows his own Heart ſo perfectly, as to be able to give a certain Account of the future Diſpoſition and Inclination of it, when placed under different States and Conditions of Life. He that has been bred poor, and grown up in a Cottage, knows not how his Spirits would move, and his Blood riſe, ſhould he come to handle full Bags, to ſee ſplendid Attendances, and to eat, drink, and ſleep in State. Yet no doubt, but by ſuch

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great unlikely Changes, as alſo by lower Degrees of Affluence and Fruition, Providence deſigns to ſift, and ſearch, and give the World ſome Experience of the Make and Bent of Mens Minds.

But now the vicious Perſon flies only upon the Bulk and Matter of the Gift, and conſiders not that the Giver has a Plot and a Deſign upon him; the Conſideration of which would naturally make Men cautious and circumſpect in their Behaviour: For ſurely it is not an ordinary Degree of Intemperance, that would prompt a Man to drink intemperately, before thoſe, who, he knows, gave him his Freedom, only to try whether he would uſe it to Exceſs or no. God gave *Saul* a rich Booty upon the Conqueſt of *Amalek*, to try whether he would preferr real *Obedience* before pretended *Sacrifice*, and the performing of a *Command* before *flying upon the Spoil*: But his Ignorance of the Uſe, to which God deſigned that proſperous Event, made him let looſe the Reins of his Folly and his Covetouſneſs, even to the Blaſting of his Crown, and the Taking the Scepter from his Family, 1 *Sam.* xv. 23. *Becauſe thou haſt rejected the Word of the Lord*, (ſaid *Samuel* to him) *he hath alſo rejected thee from being King*:

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King: So that this was the Effect of his misunderstood Success, he conquered *Amalek*, but destroyed himself.

2. The second End and Design of God in giving Prosperity, and of which all wicked Persons are either *ignorant* or *regardless*, is to encourage them in a constant, humble Expression of their Gratitude to the Bounty of their Maker, who deals forth such rich and plentiful Provisions to his undeserving Creatures. God would have every Temporal Blessing raise that Question in the Heart; *Lord, what is Man, that thou visiteſt him, or the Son of Man, that thou ſo regardeſt him?* He never sends the Pleasures of the Spring, nor the Plenties of Harvest to surfeit, but to oblige the Sons of Men; and the very Fruits of the *Earth* are intended as Arguments to carry their Thoughts to *Heaven.*

But the wicked and sensual Part of the World are only concerned to find Scope and Room enough to wallow in; if they can but *have* it, whence they *have* it troubles not their Thoughts, *saying Grace* is no Part of their *Meal*; they feed and grovel like Swine under an Oak, filling themselves with the Mast, but never so much as looking up, either to the Bows that bore, or the Hands that

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that ſhook it down. This is their Temper and Deportment in the midſt of all their Enjoyments. But it is far from reaching the Purpoſes of the great Governor of the World; who makes it not his Care to gratify the Brutiſhneſs and Stupidity of evil Perſons. He will not be their *Purveyor* only, but their *Inſtructor* alſo, and ſee them *taught*, as well as *fed* by his Liberality.

3. The third End that God gives Men Proſperity for, and of which wicked Perſons take no Notice, is to make them helpful to Society. No Man holds the Abundance of Wealth, Power, and Honour, that Heaven has bleſſed him with, as a *Proprietor*, but as a *Steward*, as the Truſtee of Providence to uſe and diſpenſe it for the Good of thoſe whom he converſes with. For does any one think, that the Divine Providence concerns itſelf to lift him up to a Station of Power, only to inſult and domineer over thoſe who are round about him; and to ſhew the World how able he is to do a Miſchief, or a ſhrewd Turn? No, God depoſits (and he does but depoſit) a Power in his Hand to encourage Vertue, and to relieve oppreſſed Innocence; and in a word, to act as his Deputy, and as God himſelf would do, ſhould he be

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pleaſed to act immediately in Affairs here below.

God bids a great and rich Perſon riſe and ſhine, as he bids the Sun, that is, not for himſelf, but for the Neceſſities of the World. And none is ſo honourable in his own Perſon, as he who is helpful to others. When God makes a Man wealthy and potent, he paſſes a double Obligation upon him; one, that he gives him Riches, the other, that he gives him an Opportunity of exerciſing a great Vertue; for ſurely, if God ſhall be pleaſed to make me his Almoner, and the Conduit by which his Goodneſs may deſcend upon my diſtreſſed Neighbour; though the Charity be perſonally mine, yet both of us have Cauſe to thank God for it, I that I can be *vertuous*, and he that he is *relieved*.

But the wicked, worldly Perſon looks no further than himſelf; his *Charity ends at Home*, where it ſhould *only begin*. He thinks that Providence fills his Purſe, and his Barns, only to pamper his own Carcaſs, to invite him to take his Eaſe and his Fill, that is, to ſerve his baſe Appetites with all the Occaſions of Sin. It is not his Buſineſs to *do good*, but only to *enjoy* it, and to *enjoy* it ſo, as to leſſen it, by monopolizing and confining it.

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Whereupon being ignorant of the Purpoſe, it is no wonder, if he alſo abuſes the *Bounty* of Providence, and ſo perverts it to *his own Deſtruction.*

2. The ſecond General Reaſon, *why the Proſperity of Fools proves deſtructive to them, is,* Becauſe Proſperity (as the Nature of Man now ſtands) has a peculiar Force and Fitneſs to abate Mens Vertues, and to heighten their Corruptions.

1. And firſt for its abating their Vertues. Vertue of any ſort whatſoever, is a Plant that grows upon no Ground, but ſuch an one as is frequently tilled and cultivated with the ſevereſt Labour. But what a Stranger is Toil and Labour to a great Fortune? Perſons poſſeſſed of this, judge themſelves to have actually all that, for which Labour can be Rational. For Men uſually labour to be rich, great, and eminent. And theſe are born to all this, as to an Inheritance. They are at the Top of the Hill already; ſo that while others are climbing and panting to get up, they have nothing elſe to do, but to lie down and ſun themſelves, and at their own *Eaſe* be Spectators of other Mens *Labours.*

But it is Poverty and Hardſhip that has made the moſt famed Commanders, the fitteſt

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fitteſt Perſons for Buſineſs, the moſt expert Stateſmen, and the greateſt Philoſophers. For that has firſt puſhed them on upon the Account of *Neceſſity*, which being ſatisfied, they have aimed a Step higher at *Convenience*; and ſo being at length inured to a Courſe of vertuous and generous Sedulity, Pleaſure has continued that, which Neceſſity firſt began; till their Endeavours have been crowned with Eminence, Maſterſhip, and Perfection in the Way they have been engaged in.

But would the young Effeminate Gallant, that never knew what it was to want his Will, that every Day cloaths himſelf with the Riches, and ſwims in the Delights of the World, would he, I ſay, chooſe to riſe out of his ſoft Bed at Midnight, to begin an hard and a long March, to engage in a crabbed Study, or to follow ſome tedious perplexed Buſineſs? No, he will have his Servants, and the Sun itſelf *riſe before him*; when his Breakfaſt is ready, he will make himſelf ready too; unleſs perhaps ſometimes his Hounds and his Huntſmen break his Sleep, and ſo make him *early* in order to his being *Idle*.

Hence we obſerve ſo many great Families to decay and moulder away through the Debauchery

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bauchery and Sottiſhneſs of the Heir: The Reaſon of which is, that the Poſſeſſion of an Eſtate does not prompt Men to thoſe ſevere and vertuous Practices, by which it was firſt acquired. The Grand-Child perhaps comes and drinks, and whores himſelf out of thoſe fair Lands, Mannors, and Manſions, which his glorious Anceſtors had fought, or ſtudyed themſelves into, which they had got by preſerving their Country againſt an Invaſion, by facing the Enemy in the Field, hungry and thirſty, early and late, by preferring a brave Action before a ſound Sleep, though Nature might never ſo much require it.

When the Succeſs and Courage of the *Romans* had made them Maſters of the Wealth and Pleaſures of all the conquered Nations round about them, we ſee how quickly the Edge of their Valour was dulled, and the rigorous Honeſty of their Morals diſſolved and melted away with thoſe Delights, which too too eaſily circumvent and overcome the Hearts of Men. So that inſtead of the *Camilli*, the *Fabricii*, the *Scipio*'s, and ſuch like Propagators of the growing Greatneſs of the *Roman* Empire, who lived as high Things as they performed; as ſoon as the Bulk of it grew vaſt and unlimited upon the Reign of

Auguſtus

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Auguſtus Cæſar, we find a degenerous Race of *Caligula*'s, *Nero*'s, and *Vitellius*'s; and of other inferiour Sycophants and Flatterers, who neither knew nor affected any other Way of making themſelves conſiderable, but by a ſervile adoring of the Vices and Follies of great Ones above them, and a baſe treacherous informing againſt vertuous and brave Perſons about them.

The whole Buſineſs that was carried on with ſuch Noiſe and Eagerneſs in that great City, then the Empreſs of the Weſtern World, was nothing elſe but to build magnificently, to feed luxuriouſly, to frequent Sports and Theatres, to run *for the Sportula*, and in a word, to flatter, and to be flattered; the Effects of a too full and unwieldy Proſperity. But ſurely they could not have had Leiſure to think upon their *Sumens*, their *Mullets*, their *Lucrinian Oyſters*, their *Phœnicopters*, and the like; they could not have made a Rendevouz of all the Elements at their Table every Day, in ſuch a prodigious Variety of Meats and Drinks; they could not, I ſay, have thus intended theſe Things, had the *Gauls* been beſieging their *Capitol*: Or *Hannibal* in the Head of his *Carthaginian* Army *rapping at their Doors*: This would quickly

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quickly have turned their *Spits* into *Swords*; and whet their Teeth too againſt their Enemies. But when Peace, Eaſe, and Plenty took away theſe Whetſtones of Courage and Emulation, they inſenſibly ſlid into the *Aſiatick* Softneſs, and were intent upon nothing but their *Cooks*, and their Ragous, their fine Attendants, and unuſual Habits; ſo that the *Roman* Genius was, (as the *Engliſh* ſeems to be now) even loſt and ſtifled, and the Conquerors themſelves transformed into the Guiſe and Garb of the Conquered; till by Degrees the Empire ſhrivelled and pined away; and from ſuch a *Surfeit* of immoderate Proſperity, paſſed at length into a final *Conſumption*.

Nor is this ſtrange, if we conſider Man's Nature, and reflect upon the great Impotence and Difficulty that it finds in advancing into the Ways of Vertue meerly by itſelf, without ſome collateral Aids and Aſſiſtances; and ſuch Helps as ſhall ſmooth the Way before it, by removing all Hindrances and Impediments. For Vertue, as it firſt lies in the Heart of Man, is but as a little Spark; which may indeed be blown into a Flame; it has that innate Force in it, that being cheriſhed and furthered in its Courſe, the leaſt Particle falling

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falling from a Candle may climb the Top of Palaces, waſte a City, and conſume a Neighbourhood. But then the Suitableneſs of the Fewel, and the Wind and the Air muſt conſpire with its Endeavours: This is the Breath that muſt enliven and fan, and bear it up till it becomes mighty and victorious. Otherwiſe do we think that that little Thing, that falling upon a Thatch, or a Stack of Corn, prevails ſo marvellouſly, could exert its Strength and its Flames, its Terror and its Rage, falling into the Dew or the Duſt? There it is preſently checked, and left to his own little Bulk to preſerve itſelf; which meeting with no catching Matter, preſently expires and dies, and becomes weak and inſignificant.

In like manner let us ſuppoſe a Man according to his natural Frame and Temper, addicted to Modeſty and Temperance, to vertuous and ſober Courſes. Here is indeed ſomething improveable into a bright and a noble Perfection; Nature has kindled the Spark, ſown the Seed, and we ſee the rude Draught, and firſt Lineaments of a *Joſeph*, a *Cato*, or a *Fabricius*. But now has this little *Embryo* Strength enough to thruſt itſelf into the World? To hold up its Head, and

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to maintain its Course to a perfect Maturity, against all the Assaults and Batteries of Intemperance; all the Snares and Trapans that Common Life lays in its Way to extinguish and suppress it? Can it abstain in the midst of all the Importunities and Opportunities of Sensuality, without being confirmed and disciplined by long Hardships, severe Abridgments, and the Rules of Vertue, frequently inculcated, and carefully pressed? No, we shall quickly find those hopeful Beginnings dashed and swallowed up by such ruining Delights. Prosperity is but a bad Nurse to Vertue; a Nurse which is like to starve it in its Infancy, and to spoil it in its Growth.

I come now in the next place to shew, that as it has such an Aptness to lessen and abate Vertue, so it has a peculiar Force also to heighten and enflame Mens Corruptions.

Nothing shall more effectually betray the Heart into a Love of Sin, and a Loathing of Holiness, than an ill managed Prosperity. It is like some Meats, the more luscious, so much the more dangerous. Prosperity and Ease upon an unsanctified, impure Heart, is like the Sun-Beams upon a Dung-hill, it raises many filthy, noisome Exhalations. The same Soldiers, who in hard Service, and in the Battle,

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Battle, are in perfect Subjection to their Leaders, in Peace and Luxury are apt to mutiny, and rebel. That corrupt Affection which has lain, as it were, dead and frozen in the midst of distracting Businesses, or under Adversity, when the Sun of Prosperity has shined upon it, then, like a Snake, it presently recovers its former Strength and Venom. Vice must be caressed and smiled upon, that it may thrive and sting. It is starved by Poverty. It droops under the Frowns of Fortune, and pines away upon Bread and Water. But when the Channels of Plenty run high; and every Appetite is plyed with Abundance and Variety, so that *Satisfaction* is but a mean Word to express its Enjoyment; then the inbred Corruption of the Heart shews itself pampered and insolent; too unruly for Discipline, and too big for Correction.

Which will appear the better, by considering those Vices, which more particularly receive Improvement by Prosperity.

1. And the first is *Pride*. Who almost is there, whose Heart does not *swell* with his *Bags*? And whose Thoughts do not follow the Proportions of his Condition? What Difference has been seen in the same Man poor and preferred? His Mind like a Mushroom

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has ſhot up in a Night. His Buſineſs is firſt to forget himſelf, and then his Friends. When the Sun ſhines, then the Peacock diſplays his Train.

We know when *Hezekiah*'s Treaſuries were full, his Armories repleniſhed, and the Pomp of his Court rich and ſplendid, how his Heart was lifted up, and what Vaunts he made of all to the *Babyloniſh* Ambaſſadors, *Iſa.* xxix. 2. Though in the End, as moſt proud Fools do, he ſmarted for his Oſtentation. See *Nebuchadnezzar* alſo ſtrutting himſelf upon the Survey of that Maſs of Riches, and ſettled Grandeur that Providence had bleſſed his Court with. It ſwelled his Heart, till it broke out at his Mouth in that Rodomontade, *Dan.* iv. 30. *Is not this great* Babylon *that I have built for the Houſe of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Glory of my Majeſty?* Now, that Proſperity, by fomenting a Man's Pride, lays a certain Train for his Ruin, will eaſily be acknowledged by him, who either from Scripture or Experience ſhall learn what a Spite Providence conſtantly owes the *proud Perſon.* He is the very Eye-Sore of Heaven; and God even looks upon his own Supremacy as concerned to abaſe him.

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2. Another Sin that is apt to receive Increase and Growth from Prosperity, is Luxury and Uncleanness. *Sodom* was a Place *watered like the Garden of God*, Gen. xiii. 10. *There was in it Fulness of Bread*, Ezek. xvi. 49. and a redundant Fruition of all Things. This was the Condition of *Sodom*, and what the Sin of it was, and the dismal Consequence of that Sin, is too well known. The *Israelites* committing Fornication with the Daughters of *Moab*, which reaped down so many Thousands of them at once, was introduced with Feasting and Dancing, and all the Gayeties and Festivities of a prosperous, triumphing People. We read of nothing like Adultery in a persecuted *David* in the Wilderness; he fled here and there like a chast Roe upon the Mountains; but when the Delicacies of the Court softened and ungirt his Spirit, when he drowzed upon his Couch, and sunned himself upon the Leads of his Palace; then it was, that this great Hero fell by a Glance, and buried his Glories in his Neighbour's Bed; gaining to his Name a lasting Slur, and to his Conscience a fearful Wound.

As *Solomon* says of a Man surprized with Surfeit and Intemperance, we may say of

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every fooliſh Man immerſed in Proſperity, *that his Eyes ſhall look upon ſtrange Women, and his Heart ſhall utter perverſe Things.* 'Tis a tempting Thing for the Fool to be gadding Abroad in a fair Day. But *Dinah* knows not, but the Snare may be laid for her, and ſhe return with a Rape upon her Honour, baffled and deflowered, and robbed of the Crown of her Virginity. *Lot*'s Daughters revelled and banqueted their Father into Inceſt.

The unclean Devil haunts the Families of the rich, the gallant, and the high Livers; and there is nothing but the Wiſdom from above, which deſcends upon ſtrict, humble, and praying Perſons, that can preſerve the Soul pure and ſound in the killing Neighbourhood of ſuch a Contagion.

3. A third Sin that Proſperity inclines the corrupt Heart of Man to, is great Prophaneneſs, and Neglect of God in the Duties of Religion. Thoſe who lie ſoft and warm in a rich Eſtate, ſeldom come to heat themſelves at the Altar. It is a poor Fervour that ariſes from Devotion, in compariſon of that which ſparkles from the generous Draughts, and the feſtival Fare which attend the Tables of the Wealthy and the Great.

Such

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Such Men are (as they think) so happy, that they have no Leisure to be holy. They look upon Prayer as the Work of the Poor and the Solitary, and such as have nothing to spend but their Time and Themselves. If *Jesurun* wax fat, it is ten to one but he will kick against him who made him so.

And now, I suppose, a Reflection upon the Premises cannot but press every serious Person with a Consideration of the ticklish Estate he stands in, while the Favours of Providence are pleas'd to breathe upon him in these gentle Gales. No Man is wholly out of the Danger which we have been discoursing of. For every Man has so much of Folly in him, as he has of Sin; and therefore he must know, that his Foot is not so steddy, but it may slip and slide in the oily Paths of Prosperity.

The Treachery and Weakness of his own Heart may betray and insensibly bewitch him into the Love and Liking of a fawning Vice. What the Prophet says of *Wine* and *Musick*, may be also said of Prosperity, whose Intoxications are not at all less, that *it steals away the Heart*. The Man shall find that his Heart is *gone*, though he perceives not *when it goes*.

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And the Reaſon of all this is, becauſe it is natural for the Soul in Time of Proſperity to be more careleſs and unbent; and conſequently not keeping ſo narrow a Watch over itſelf, is more expoſed to the Invaſions and Arts of its induſtrious Enemy. Upon which Account, the Wiſe and the Cautious will look upon the moſt promiſing Seaſon of Proſperity with a doubtful and a ſuſpicious Eye; as bewaring, leſt while it offers a Kiſs to the Lips, it brings a Javelin for the Side; many Hearts have been thus *melted*, that could never have been *broke*. This alſo may be a full, though a ſad Argument to allay the fooliſh Envy, with which ſome are apt to look upon Men of great and flouriſhing Eſtates at a Diſtance: For how do they know, that what they make the Object of their Envy, is not a fitter Object for their Pity? And that this gliſtring Perſon ſo much admired by them, is not now a preparing for his Ruin, and fatting for the Slaughters of Eternity? That he does not eat his Bane, and carouſe his Poyſon? The poor Man perhaps is curſed into all his Greatneſs and Proſperity. Providence has put it as a Sword into his Hand, for the wounding and deſtroying of his own Soul: For he knows not how to uſe any of theſe

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theſe Things; and ſo has only this Advantage, that he is damned in State, and goes to Hell with more Eaſe, more Flouriſh, and Magnificence than other Men.

And thus much for the ſecond General Reaſon, Why the Proſperity of Fools proves fatal and deſtructive to them. I come now to the third and laſt, which is, Becauſe Proſperity directly *indiſpoſes Men to the proper Means of their Amendment and Recovery.*

1. As firſt, it renders them utterly averſe from receiving Counſel and Admonition, *Jer.* xxii. 21. *I ſpake to thee in thy Proſperity, and thou ſaidſt I will not hear.* The Ear is wanton and ungoverned, and the Heart inſolent and obdurate, till one is pierced, and the other made tender by Affliction. Proſperity leaves a Kind of Dulneſs and Lethargy upon the Spirits; ſo that the ſtill Voice of God will not awaken a Man, but he muſt thunder and lighten about his Ears, before he will be brought to take Notice, that God ſpeaks to him. All the Divine Threatnings and Reprehenſions beat upon ſuch an one, but as Stubble upon a Braſs-Wall; the Man and his Vice ſtand firm, unſhaken, and unconcerned; he preſumes, that the Courſe of his Affairs will proceed always as it does, ſmoothly,

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ly, and without Interruption; *that to Morrow will be as to Day, and much more abundant*; It is natural for Men in a prosperous Condition neither to *love* nor *suspect* a Change.

But besides, Prosperity does not only shut the Ear against Counsel, by reason of the Dulness that it leaves upon the Senses; but also upon the Account of that Arrogance, and untutor'd Haughtiness that it brings upon the Mind; which of all other Qualities chiefly stops the Entrance of Advice, *by making* a Man look upon himself as too Great, and too Wise, to admit of the Assistances of another's Wisdom. The richest Man will still think himself the wisest Man. And where there is Fortune, there needs no Advice.

2. Much Prosperity utterly unfits such Persons for the sharp Tryals of Adversity: Which yet God uses as the most proper and sovereign Means to correct and reduce a Soul grown vain and extravagant, by a long, uninterrupted Felicity. But an unsanctified, unregenerate Person passing into so great an Alteration of Estate, is like a Man in a Sweat entring into a River, or throwing himself into the Snow; he is presently struck to the Heart;

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Heart; he languiſhes, and meets with certain Death in the Change. His Heart is too effeminate and weak, to conteſt with Want and Hardſhip, and the killing Miſery *of having been happy heretofore.* For in this Condition, he certainly miſ-behaves himſelf one of theſe two Ways.

1. He either faints, and deſponds, and parts with his Hope together with his Poſſeſſions. He has neither Confidence in Providence, nor Subſtance in himſelf, to bear him out, and buoy up his ſinking Spirit, when the Storms and Showers of an adverſe Fortune ſhall deſcend, and beat upon him, and ſhake in Pieces the pitiful Fabrick of his earthly Comforts. The Earth he treads upon, is his ſole Joy and Inheritance, and that which ſupports his Feet, muſt ſupport his Heart alſo; otherwiſe he cannot like *Job* reſt upon that Providence, that places him upon a Dung-hill.

2. Such a Perſon, if he does not faint and ſink in Adverſity, then on the contrary, he will murmur and tumultuate, and blaſpheme the God that afflicts him. A bold and a ſtubborn Spirit naturally throws out its Malignity this Way. It will make a Man die curſing and raving, and even breathe his laſt

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in a Blaſphemy. No Man knows how high the Corruption of ſome Natures will work, and foam, being provoked and exaſperated by Affliction.

Having thus ſhewn the Reaſons, Why Proſperity becomes deſtructive to ſome Perſons; ſurely it is now but Rational, in ſome brief Directions, to ſhew how it may become otherwiſe; and that is, in one word, by altering the Quality of the Subject. Proſperity, I ſhew, was deſtructive to *Fools*; and therefore, the only Way for a Man not to find it deſtructive, is for him not to be a *Fool*; and this he may avoid by a pious Obſervance of theſe following Rules. As

1. Let him ſeriouſly conſider upon what weak Hinges his Proſperity and Felicity hangs. Perhaps the Croſs falling of a little Accident, the Omiſſion of a Ceremony, or the Miſplacing of a Circumſtance may determine all his Fortunes for ever. Or perhaps his whole Intereſt, his Poſſeſſions, and his Hopes too, may live by the Breath of another, who may breathe his laſt to Morrow. And ſhall a Man forget God and Eternity for that which cannot ſecure him the Reverſion of a Day's Happineſs? Can any Favourite bear himſelf high and inſolent upon the Stock

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of the largeſt Fortune imaginable, who has read the Story of *Wolſey* or *Sejanus?* Not only the *Death*, but the *Humour* of his Prince or Patron may diveſt him of all his Glories, and ſend him ſtripp'd and naked to his long Reſt. *How* quickly is the Sun overcaſt, and how often does he ſet in a Cloud, and that Cloud break in a Storm! He that well conſiders this, will account it a ſurer Livelihood to depend upon the *Sweat* of his own *Brow*, than the *Favour* of another Man's. And even while it is his Fortune to enjoy it, he will be far from Confidence; Confidence which is the Downfal of a Man's Happineſs, and a Traytor to him in all his Concerns; for ſtill it is the confident Perſon who is deceived.

2. Let a Man conſider, how little he is bettered by Proſperity as to thoſe Perfections which are chiefly valuable. All the Wealth of both the *Indies* cannot add one Cubit to the Stature, either of his Body or his Mind. It can neither better his Health, advance his Intellectuals, or refine his Morals. We ſee thoſe languiſh and die, who command the Phyſick and Phyſicians of a whole Kingdom. And ſome are Dunces in the midſt of Libraries, dull and ſottiſh in the very Boſom

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Bosom of *Athens*; and far from Wisdom, though they Lord it over the Wise.

For does he, who was once both poor and ignorant, find his Notions or his Manners any Thing improved, because perhaps his Friend or Father died, and left him rich? Did his Ignorance expire with the other's Life? Or does he understand one Proposition in Philosophy, one Mystery in his Profession at all the more for his keeping a Bayliff or a Steward? As great and as good a Landlord as he is, May he not for all this have an *empty Room* yet to Lett? And that such an one, as is like to continue empty upon his Hands (or rather Head) for ever? If so, surely then, none has Cause to value himself upon that, which is equally incident to the worst and weakest of Men.

3*dly* and *Lastly*. Let a Man correct the Gayeties and Wandrings of his Spirit, by the severe Duties of Mortification. Let him (as *David* says) *mingle his Drink with Weeping*, and dash his Wine with such Water. Let him effect that upon himself by Fasting and Abstinence, which God would bring others to by Penury and Want. And by so doing, he shall dis-enslave and redeem his Soul from a Captivity to the Things he enjoys,

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joys, and so make himself *Lord*, as well as *Possessor* of what he has. *For* Repentance supplies the Disciplines of Adversity. And Abstinence makes Affliction needless, by really compassing the Design of it upon the nobler Accounts of Choice: The Scarceness of some Meals will sanctify the Plenty of others. And they are the *Quadragesimal Fasts* which fit both Body and Soul for the *Festivals* of *Easter*.

The wisest Persons in the World have often abridged themselves in the midst of their greatest Affluence; and given Bounds to their Appetites, while they felt none in their Fortunes. And that Prince who wore Sackcloth under his Purple, wore the Livery of Vertue, as well as the Badge of Sovereignty; and was resolved to be *good*, in spite of all his *Greatness*.

Many other Considerations may be added, and these farther improved. But to sum up all in short; since *Folly is so bound up in the Heart of Man*, and since the *Fool* in his *Best*, that is, in his *most prosperous* Condition, stands tottering upon the very Brink of Destruction, surely the great Use of the whole foregoing Discourse should be to remind us in all our Prayers, not so much to sollicit God for any temporal

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temporal Enjoyment, as for an *Heart* that may *fit* us for it; and that God would be the *Chooſer*, as well as the *Giver* of our Portion in this World; who alone is able to ſuit and ſanctify our *Condition to us*, and *us to our Condition.*

To whom therefore, be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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Shameleſneſs in Sin, the certain Forerunner of Deſtruction:

IN A

DISCOURSE

UPON

JEREMIAH VI. 15.

Were they aſhamed, when they had committed Abomination? Nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh; therefore ſhall they fall amongſt them that fall; at the time that I viſit them ſhall they be caſt down, ſaith the Lord.

HE, who after the Commiſſion of great Sins, can look God, his Conſcience, and the World in the Face, *without bluſhing*, gives a ſhrewd and ſad Demonſtration, that he is too far gone in the Ways of Sin and Death,

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to be reclaimed to God, or recovered to himself, without a Miracle. For having lost not only the Substance of Vertue, but the very *Colour of it too*, (as the Philosopher called *Blushing*) and the Principles of Morality having upon the same Account lost all Hold of him; he now seems to claim a Place in the highest Rank of Sinners; and from the Condition of the actually Disobedient, and (as yet) Impenitent, to have passed into the unspeakably worse Estate of the *Desperate* and *Incurable*. For though Almighty God is very free and forward in the Addresses of his Grace to the Souls of Men, yet still there must be something in them *for Grace to work upon*; to wit, something of *natural Spiritual Sense and Tenderness*; which if once extinct and gone, (as they may be, and God knows too often are) the Spirit of God will find nothing in such a Soul to entertain its *Motions*, or receive its *Impressions*; but the Man having *sinned himself past all Feeling*, may, I fear, be but too justly supposed to have *sinned himself past Grace too*.

And such a Sort of Sinners seems the Prophet to encounter all along this Chapter. A Pack of Wretches hardned and confirmed in their Sins; daring God, and defying his Laws;

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Laws; with one Foot (as it were) trampling upon *natural Conſcience*, and with the other upon *Religion*: Wretches, who by ſhaking off all Shame and Modeſty (the firſt and kindlieſt Reſults of Common Humanity) ſeem even to have ſinned themſelves into another *Kind or Species*: While the very *Shamefulneſs* of the Sins they committed, utterly took away all *Shame* from the Committers of them; and the Guilt which ſhould have covered and confounded their Faces with *Bluſhing*, was the very Cauſe *that they could not bluſh*.

Which ſhort Account and Deſcription of the enormous Impiety of the Perſons here pointed at in the Text, being thus premiſed, let us now proceed to the Conſideration of the Words themſelves, wherein we have theſe four Things obſervable.

Firſt, The Guilt of ſome extraordinary, crying Sins charged upon the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, in theſe Words. *They had committed Abomination.* An Expreſſion importing ſome ſuperlative Sort of Villany acted by them, whatſoever it might be.

Secondly, Their Deportment under this Guilt: *They were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh.*

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Thirdly, God's high Resentment of the Monstrousness of such a shameless Carriage, implyed in that vehement Interrogatory Exclamation, *Were they ashamed?*

Fourthly and *Lastly*, The Judgment consequent hereupon in the concluding Words of the Text, *Therefore they shall fall amongst them that fall*, &c.

These Particulars I shall not prosecute in that Order and Distinction in which they have been laid down, but shall gather the entire Sense and Drift of them into this one Proposition, which I intend for the Subject of the following Discourse; namely,

That Shamelessness in Sin is the certain Fore-runner of Destruction.

The Prosecution of which Proposition I shall manage under these particular Heads.

1*st*, I shall shew, *What Shame is*, and the *Influence* it has upon the Government of Mens *Manners*.

2*dly*, I shall shew, By what Ways Men come *to cast off Shame*, and to grow impudent in Sin.

3*dly*, I shall shew, The several *Degrees* of Shamelessness in Sin.

4*thly*,

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4*thly*, I shall shew, *The Reasons why it so remarkably and effectually brings down* Judgment and Destruction upon the Sinner: And

5*thly* and *Lastly*, I shall shew, *What those Judgments most commonly are*, by which it procures the Sinner's Ruin and Destruction. Of all which in their Order: And

1. For the first of them. *What Shame is, and what Influence it has upon the Government of Mens Manners.* In order to which, if we consider the natural Frame of Man's Mind, and the Ways and Methods, by which the Divine Wisdom governs the Affairs of the World, we shall find none more effectual to this great End, than that Contrariety of *Passions* and *Affections* planted by God in the Heart of Man; which though in themselves most eager and impetuous, and such as are wholly unable to prescribe either Rule or *Measure* to their own Operations, yet in the whole OEconomy of them, are disposed with such admirable Equality, that the Vehemence of one Passion is still matched and balanced with the Force of another: It is evident from Reason, and too sad an Experience, that *Desire*, *Anger*, *Hatred*, and the like Passions, are

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of that Fury and Transport in their Egress to, and Actings about their respective Objects, that the greatest Disturbances in the World spring from thence, and would, no doubt, from Disturbance pass into Confusion, were there not such Passions as *Sorrow*, *Fear*, and *Shame* to obviate and controul them in their Excess: So that these are (as it were) the Shores and Bounds which Providence has set in the Soul of Man, to check, and to give Laws to the Overflowings of those contrary Affections, which would otherwise bear down all before them, and drive all Peace and Order out of the World. This I thought fit to remark of the Passions in general.

And now for the Passion of *Shame* in particular, to shew what that is, and wherein it does consist. I conceive this may be a full Account of the Nature of it, *viz. That it is a Grief of Mind springing from the Apprehension of some Disgrace brought upon a Man.* And Disgrace consists properly in Mens Knowledge or Opinion of some Defect Natural, or Moral belonging to them. So that when a Man is sensible, that any Thing defective or amiss, either in his Person, Manners, or the Circumstances of his Condition is known, or took Notice of by others; from

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from this Sense or Apprehension of his, there naturally results upon his Mind a certain Grief or Displeasure; which Grief properly constitutes the Passion of *Shame*. So that *Shame* presupposes in the Mind these two Things.

1. A great Esteem and Value of every Thing belonging to the due Perfection of a Man's Being. And

2. An earnest Desire of other Mens Knowledge or Opinion of this Perfection, as possessed by him.

And consequently, as *Glory* is the Joy a Man conceives from his own *Perfections, considered with relation to the Opinion of others*, as observed and acknowledged by them, so *Shame* is the *Grief* a Man conceives from his own Imperfections, considered with relation to the Opinion of the World taking Notice of them; and in one Word, may be defined *Grief upon the Sense of Disesteem*. And there is not in the whole Mind of Man a Passion of a quicker, and more tender Sense, and which receives a deeper and a keener Impression from its Object, than this of *Shame*. Which in my Judgment affords a stronger Argument to prove a Man a Creature naturally designed *for Society* and Conversation, than any that are usually produced for that

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Purpose. For were not every Man conscious to himself of his Desire and Need of the Benefits of Conversation, why should he be so solicitous to approve himself to the good Opinion of others? And with so much Sorrow and Impatience regret other Mens Knowledge of any Imperfection belonging to him? Which yet he himself could quietly enough brook the Knowledge of, so long as it lay confined within his own Breast, and heartily love *himself with all his Faults*. And as the Nature of this Passion argues a Man disposed to Society, so when we consider that amongst the *Objects* of this Passion, those Imperfections, which relate to a Man's Actions and Manners, hold the prime Place; so that a Man is more ashamed to be accounted a dishoneſt, or unjust, than a weak, or an unfortunate Man; it is evident from hence, that the Apprehensions and Resentments of the Turpitude and Dishonesty of our Actions, are founded upon something born into the World with us, and spring originally from the first and most native Discourses of the Soul about its own Actions.

Now from this, that *Shame* is grounded upon the *Dread* Man naturally has of the ill Opinion of others, and that chiefly with reference

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rence to the *Turpitude or Immorality of his Actions*, it is manifeſt, that it is that great and powerful Inſtrument in the Soul of Man, whereby Providence both preſerves Society, and ſupports Government; foraſmuch as it is the moſt effectual Reſtraint upon him from the doing of ſuch Things as more immediately tend to diſturb the one, and deſtroy the other. It is indeed more effectual than bare Law, and that upon a double Account.

1*ſt*, Of the Nature of the Evil threatned by it. And

2*dly*, Of the Largeneſs of its Extent.

1. And firſt for the *Evil threatned*. Whereas the Law directly threatens Pains of the Body, or Mutilation of Limbs to the Delinquent: *Shame* threatens *Diſgrace*; which above all other Things is properly the Torment of the Soul, and (conſidering the innate Generoſity of Man's Mind diſpoſing him to prefer *a good Name* before Life itſelf) is much more grievous and unſupportable to him, than thoſe other Inflictions. So that in that *grand Exemplar* of Suffering, even our Saviour himſelf, *his Enduring the Croſs* is heightened, and ſet off by *his Deſpiſing the Shame*, as that which far ſurpaſſed all the Cruelties of the Rods, the Nails, and the Spear,

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Spear, and, upon the truest Estimate of Pain, much the bitterer Passion of the two. And from hence also it is, that no Penal Laws are found so forcible for the Controul of Vice, as those wherein Shame makes the chief Ingredient of the Penalty. Death at the Block looks not so grim and dismal as Death at the Gibbet; for here it meets a Man clad with Infamy and Reproach, which does a more grievous Execution upon his Mind, than the other can upon his Body. Nay Wounds, and Pain, and Death itself, from *terrible*, sometimes become *contemptible*, where they are looked upon but as a Passage to *Honour*, and many are easily brought to write their Names with their own *Blood* in the Records of Fame and Immortality. So that the *Sting of Death* here, is *Shame*; and the Matter of the sharpest Punishment stripped of all Reproach and Ignominy, is so far from overwhelming the Mind with Horror and Consternation, that in many Circumstances it is capable of being reconciled even to Nature itself, and that in such a Degree, that instead of being submitted to barely upon the Stock of *Patience*, it may be made the Object of a rational *Choice*. But

2. As

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2. As to the other Advantage, which Senſe of *Shame* has above the Law; to wit, that it extends itſelf to more Objects than the Law does, and conſequently reſtrains and prevents more Evil than the Law can: It is to be obſerved, that whereas the Laws of Men in puniſhing the Tranſgreſſors of them, take Notice only of ſuch groſs Enormities as directly tend to make a Breach upon Government, and overthrow Society; the Senſe of *Shame*, on the other ſide, reaches likewiſe to all Indecencies, and not only to ſuch Things as ſhake the *Being*, but to ſuch alſo as impair the Beauties and Ornaments of a Society. And by that Means guards the Behaviour of Men, even againſt the firſt Approach, and indeed the very Shew and Semblance of Immorality. Such a ſovereign Influence has this Paſſion upon the Regulation of the Lives and Actions of Men; indeed ſo ſovereign, and ſo great, that a *Society* ſet up purpoſely for the *Reformation of Manners* (God bleſs it) can hardly have a greater.

And no wonder, if we conſider the unaccountable Force of it in thoſe ſtrange Effects it has ſometimes had upon Men. Some have been ſtruck with Phrenzy and Diſtraction, and ſome with Death itſelf upon the ſudden Attack

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Attack of an intolerable confounding *Shame*: The Sense of which, has at once bereaved them of all their other Senses, and they have given up the *Ghost* and their *Credit* together. Take one of the greatest and most approved Courage, who makes nothing to look Death and Danger in the Face, who can laugh at the Glittering of Swords, the Clashing of Armour, and the Hissing of Bullets, with all the other Terrors of War. Take, I say, such an one in a base and a shameful Action; and the Eye of the Discoverer, like that of the Basilisk, *shall look him dead.* So that in such a Surprize, *he who is valiant, and whose Heart is as the Heart of a Lion,* shall utterly sink and melt away. *Shame* shall fly like a poysoned Arrow into his Heart, and strike *like a Dart* through his *Livor.* So inexpressibly Great sometimes are the killing Horrors of this Passion.

And as it has sometimes these prodigious Effects upon Surprize, so is it of a Malignity not at all less Fatal, when it so fastens upon the Soul, as to consume and waste it with the continual Gnawings of a lingring and habitual Grief. He, whom Shame has done its worst upon, is, *ipso facto*, stripped of all the common Comforts of Life. Every

Eye

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Eye that sees him wounds him; and he thinks he reads his *Destiny* in the Forehead of every one who beholds him. The *Light* is to him the *Shadow of Death*, he has no Heart, nor Appetite to Business; nay, his very Food is nauseous to him, and his daily Repast no Refreshment. It is his *Mind* only which feeds heartily upon his *Body*, and the Vultur within, which preys upon his Stomach. In which wretched Condition having passed some Years, first the Vigour of his Intellectuals begins to flag and dwindle away, and then his Health follows: The Hectick of the Soul produces one in the Body, the Man from an *inward* falls into an *outward* Consumption; and Death at length gives the finishing Stroke, and closes all with a sad Catastrophe. This is the natural Progress of this cruel Passion.

And thus much for the *first Thing* proposed, which was to shew, *What Shame is, and what Influence it has upon the Government of Mens Manners.* I proceed now to the

2*d*. Which is to shew, *By what Ways Men come to cast off Shame, and grow Impudent in Sin.* Concerning which, we must first of all observe, That the Principles of Shame

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Shame and Modesty are too deeply rooted in Man's Nature to be easily plucked out; which makes the Loss of them (whereso-ever they come to be lost) so extremely sinful: Shamelessness in Sin, being a Thing perfectly *Unnatural*, and (if a Man could lose his Nature as well as his Vertue) a Deviation even from Humanity itself. Nevertheless the Frailty and Mutability of Nature is such, that it is capable of being debauched even in its first, and best Notions, and of growing into such a Change of Inclination, as to become quite another Thing from what God at first made it. But how, and by what Means this comes to be effected, is the Subject of our present Enquiry; and to give some general Account of this, we must know, that by whatsoever Ways or Courses Men are brought to cast off that natural Tenderness, and Sensibility of Mind, which renders them apprehensive of any Thing done unsuitably to their Nature, by those properly is this Passion of *Shame* first lessened, and at length totally extinguished. Now that may be done several Ways.

1. By the Commission of great Sins. For these waste the Conscience, and *destroy* at once. They are (as it were) *a Course of Wickedness*

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Wickedness abridged into *one Act*; and a Custom of sinning *by Equivalence*. Lesser Sins indeed, do by Degrees fully and change the Habit of the Soul; but these transform it in a Minute: As in the Complexion of a Man's Face, he grows tanned and swarthy by little and little; but if a Blast comes, that gives him another Face and Hue in the Twinkling of an Eye. Sins of daily Incursion insensibly wear away the innate Tenderness of the Conscience; but *Whoredoms*, *Murders*, and *Perjuries*, (though never so much sanctified) and the like, tear and break it off presently. Nor does this contradict the Assertion just now premised by us, concerning the difficult Removal of Shame and Modesty. For when a Thing falls by a very great Blow, though it fall *quickly*, it cannot be said to fall *easily*. Besides that Nature can hardly pass from its first Innocence and Modesty, to the Commission of a great Crime, but by many intermediate Preparatives of Sin; unless it should chance to be strangely seized, and (as it were) ravished by some fierce and horrid Temptation. But this very rarely happens: And therefore, though great Sins do usually expel *Shame at once*, yet People seldom rush into great Sins *at first*.

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All that we insist upon in the present Case, is, That upon what Account soever such Sins come actually to be committed, they make a mighty Breach, and Invasion upon the Soul, and Shame seldom long survives the Commission of them. They steel the Forehead, and harden the Heart, and break those Bars asunder, which Modesty had originally fenced and enclosed it with. In *Jeremy* iii. 3. *Thou hadst an Whore's Forehead* (said the Prophet to *Jerusalem*) *and refusedst to be ashamed.* An Whore's Life naturally produces an Whore's Forehead. Scandalous and flagitious Actions superinduce new Hardnesses, and Confidences, which Nature of itself would never have reached to. For upon every great Sin, the Spirit of God proportionably withdraws his Presence from the Soul, and together with it, that Influence, by which alone the Principles of Modesty, and the Awe of Vertue and Goodness are kept alive, and fresh upon the Mind. And when the Soul is once rifled of these, and has lost the Honour of its Virgin-Purity, by a foul Action, it is left naked, and unguarded, and open to all the Assaults of its grand Enemy; who, if he can go on in his Attempts with any tolerable Success, will be sure never to give over,

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over, till having quite razed all Senſe of Shame and Remorſe, out of the Sinner's Heart, he at length confirms, and ſeals him up in a State of Sin and Death. And this he knows is both effectually and compendiouſly done by Sins of a peculiar, and more than ordinary Guilt, which no ſooner enter into the Soul, but he alſo enters with them, and ſo driving out all Shame before him, takes full *Livery* and *Seizing* of it, and keeps firm and quiet Poſſeſſion of the Man to his dying Day.

2dly, *Cuſtom in Sinning* never fails in the Iſſue to take away the Senſe and Shame of Sin, were a Perſon never ſo Vertuous before. For albeit the Object of *Shame* ſtill carries with it ſomething ſtrange, new, and unuſual, yet the *Strangeneſs* of any Thing wears off with the *Frequency* of its Practice: This makes it Familiar to the Mind, and being ſo, the Mind is never ſtartled, or moved at it. By *great Sins* (as we have ſhewn) the Soul caſts off Shame, all on a ſudden, but by *cuſtomary Sinning* it lays it down leiſurely, and by Degrees. And no Man proceeding in ſuch a Courſe or Method, arrives preſently at the Top of any Vice, but holding on a continual, ſteady Progreſs in the Paths

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of Sin, passes at length into a forlorn, shameless Condition by such Steps as these. First, he begins to shake off the natural Horror and Dread which he had of breaking any of God's Commands, and so *not to fear Sin*; In the next place, finding his sinful Appetites gratifyed by such Breaches of the Divine Law, he comes thereupon *to like his Sin*, and to be pleased with what he has done; and then, from ordinary Complacencies heightened, and improved by Custom, he comes passionately *to delight in such Ways*. And thus, being captivated with Delight, he resolves to continue, and persist in them; which since he can hardly do without incurring the Censure and ill Opinion of the World, he frames himself to a resolute Contempt of whatsoever is either *thought*, or *said* of him; and so having hereby done Violence to those Apprehensions of Modesty, which Nature had placed as Guardians and Overseers to his Vertue, he flings off all Shame, wears his Sin upon his Forehead, looks boldly with it, and so at *length commences* a fixed, through-paced, and compleat Sinner.

3. The Examples of *great Persons* take away the Shame of any Thing which they are

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are obſerved to *practiſe*, though never ſo foul and ſhameful in itſelf. Every ſuch Perſon ſtamps a Kind of *Authority* upon what he does; and the Examples of *Superiors*, (and much more of *Sovereigns*) are both a *Rule* and an *Encouragement* to their *Inferiors*. The Action is ſeldom *abhorred*, where the Agent is *admired*; and the *Filth* of one is hardly taken Notice of, where the *Luſtre* of the other *dazzles* the Beholder. Nothing is, or can be more contagious, than an *ill Action* ſet off with a *great Example*. For it is natural for Men to imitate thoſe above them, and to endeavour to *reſemble* (at leaſt) That, which they *cannot be*. And therefore, whatſoever they ſee ſuch Grandees do, quickly becomes current and creditable, it paſſes *cum privilegio*; And no Man bluſhes at the Imitation of a *ſcarlet*, or a *purple* Sinner, though the Sin be ſo too.

It is, in good Earneſt, a ſad Conſideration to reflect upon that intolerable Weight of Guilt, which attends the Vices of great and eminent Offenders. Every one (God knows) has Guilt enough from his own perſonal Sins, to conſign him over to eternal Miſery; but when God ſhall charge the Death of ſo many Souls upon one Man's Account, and

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tell him at the great Day, this Man had *his Drunkenness* from thee, that Man owes *his Uncleanness* to thy Example: Another was at first modest, bashful, and tender, till thy Practice, enforced by the Greatness of thy *Place* and *Person*, conquered all those Reluctancies, and brought him in the end to be *shameless* and *insensible*, of a *prostitute* Conscience, and a *reprobate Mind*. When God, I say, shall reckon all this to the Score of a great, illustrious, and exemplary Sinner, over and above his own personal Guilt, how unspeakably greater a Doom must needs pass upon him for other Mens Sins, than could have done only for his own! the Sins of all about him are really his Sins; as being committed in the Strength of that which they had seen him do. Wherein, though his Action was *personal* and particular, *yet his Influence* was *universal*.

4. The *Observation of the general and common Practice* of any Thing, takes away the Shame of that Practice. Better *be out of the World*, than not *be like the World*, is the Language of most Hearts. The Commonness of a Practice turns it into a *Fashion*, and few (we know) are ashamed to *follow that*. A Vice *Alamode* will look Vertue itself *out of Counte-*

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Countenance, and it is well, if it does not look it *out of Heart too*. Men love not to be found ſingular, eſpecially where the Singularity lies in the rugged and ſevere Paths of Vertue. Company cauſes *Confidence*, and Multitude gives both *Credit* and *Defence*; Credit to the Crime, and Defence to the Criminal. The fearfulleſt and the baſeſt Creatures got into Herds and Flocks, become Bold and Daring. And the modeſteſt Natures hardened by the Fellowſhip and Concurrence of others in the ſame vicious Courſe grow into another Frame of Spirit; and in a ſhort time loſe all Apprehenſion of the Indecency and Foulneſs of that, which they have ſo familiarly, and ſo long converſed with. Impudence fights with and by *Number*, and *by Multitude* becomes Victorious. For no Man is aſhamed to look his Fellow Thief or Drunkard in the Face, or to own a *rebellious Deſign in the Head of a Rebel-Army*.

And we ſee every Day, what a Degree of Shameleſneſs the common Practice of ſome Sins amongſt us has brought the Generality of the Nation to; ſo that Perſons of that Sex, whoſe proper Ornament ſhould *be Baſhfulneſs and Modeſty*, are grown bold and forward, offer themſelves into Company, and

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even *invite* thoſe Addreſſes, which the Severity of former Times would have ſcorned to *admit*; from the Retirements of the Cloſet they are come to brave it in Theatres and Taverns; where Vertue and Modeſty are *drunk down*; and *Honour left behind to pay the Reckoning*. And now ask ſuch Perſons with what Face they can aſſume ſuch unbecoming Liberties, and they ſhall anſwer you, that it is the *Mode*, the *Gallantry*, and *the genteel Freedom* of the preſent Age, which has redeemed itſelf from the pitiful Pedantry, and abſurd Scrupuloſity of former Times, in which thoſe Bugbears of *Credit* and *Conſcience* ſpoiled all the *Pleaſure*, the *Air*, and *Fineneſs* of Converſation. This is all the Account you ſhall have from them; and thus, when common Practice has vouched for an ill Thing, and called it by a plauſible Name; the *Credit of the Word* ſhall take away the *Shame of the Thing*: Vice grows triumphant; and knowing itſelf to be in its full Glory, ſcorns to fly to Corners or Concealments, but loves to be ſeen and gazed upon, and has thrown off the *Maſk or Vizard* as an uſeleſs, unfaſhionable Thing. This, I ſay, is the Guiſe of our Age, our *Free* Thinking, and *Freer* Practiſing Age, in which People

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People generally are ashamed of nothing; but to *be Vertuous*, and to be *thought Old.*

5*thly* and *Lastly.* I shall mention one Thing more, which renders Men shameless, and that is, to have been *once greatly and irrecoverably ashamed.* For Shame is never of any Force, but where there is some Stock of Credit to be preserved. But when a Man finds that to be lost, and the Recovery of it desperate and impossible; he lets loose his Appetites to their full Swing, and no longer *fears that* which he reckons has done *its worst* upon him already. He is like an undone Gamester, who plays on safely, knowing that he can lose no more.

And for this Cause, many wise Governors having had the utmost Advantage against some Delinquents upon this Account, yet if they were such, as were capable of being either useful or dangerous to the Publick, have thought it unsafe to *disgrace them totally.* For in this Case Government can have no Hold of them, by one of the strongest Ties in Nature, *viz.* a Regard of their Credit and Reputation: Set a Man once in the Pillory, and see whether ever after his Credit can keep him from playing the Knave, if his Interest prompts him to it: The Man has now looked

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Shame in the Face, and looked it out of Countenance too; he has *swallowed* down Scorn, and *digested* it. His Reputation is forelorn and gone; and he knows, that a *good Name once dead* has no *Resurrection.*

And thus I have done with the second Thing proposed, which was to shew, By what Ways Men come to cast off Shame, and to grow *impudent in Sin.* I proceed now to the

3*d.* Which is to shew, *The several Degrees of Shamelessness in Sin.*

I shall not pretend to recount them all, but only mention three of the most notorious: As

1. A shewing of *the greatest Respect*, and making the most obsequious Applications and Addresses to lewd and infamous Persons; and that without any Pretence of Duty requiring it, which yet alone can justify and excuse Men in it. For 'tis confessed, that no Vice can warrant the least Failure of Respect to *our Parents* or *Governors*, be they never so bad; since, in Truth, all Respect shewn to these, does not so much fall upon the Persons to whom it is directed, as redound upon the Divine Law, by which it is commanded. But when People voluntarily make their

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their Visits to Persons living in open and avowed Wickedness, affect to be of their Retinue, and their Acquaintance, and Dependance, treat them, and speak honourably and affectionately of them, this is really and properly to vouch for, and to abet their Crime; which, duly considered, ought to make their Persons as *contemptible* in the Eyes of Men, as it certainly renders them *vile* in the Sight of God. Heretofore, Persons of Honour and genteel Quality, thought, they could not give a deeper Wound to their own *Honour*, than by being so much as seen in the Company of such as had *lost theirs*: And suitable to this was the Practice of the Primitive Church. In 1 *Cor.* v. 11. *I have wrote to you*, (says St. *Paul*) *not to keep Company, if any Man, who is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat.* And in 2 *Thess.* iii. 14. *If any Man obey not our Word by this Epistle; note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed.* Were this well practised, many would need neither *Parlours* nor *Anti-Chambers* to receive Visitants in. But now all possible Courtship and Attendance is thought too

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too little to be uſed towards Perſons infamous and odious, and fit to be *viſited* by none, but by *God himſelf*, who viſits after a very different Manner from the Courtiers of the World. And what is the Ground of all this? What, the great Inducement both *to Men* and *Women* thus to addreſs to ſuch ſcandalous Livers? Why, the very Bottom and Ground of all is, that by this Means they may give Credit and Countenance to the Vice, that ſo, *as Occaſion ſerves*, they may without *Diſrepute*, practiſe it themſelves.

2. The ſecond Degree of Shameleſneſs in Sin, is, *to defend it.* In *Luk.* xvi. 15. *Ye are they who juſtify yourſelves*, ſays our Saviour to the *Phariſees*; they were not only egregious Hypocrites, and groſs Violators of the Law, but they alſo faced down the World, that they did well and meritoriouſly in thoſe very Things, in which their Hypocriſy and Violation of the Law did conſiſt. Now, even to extenuate, or excuſe a Sin is bad enough; but to defend it, is intolerable. For he who excuſes a *Sin*, ſtill ſuppoſes it to be a *Sin*, and only endeavours to cover it, or at leaſt to *take off* ſome Degree of its *Guilt*. But he who defends it, utterly *denies*

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its Guilt, and (as I may so speak) absolutely *unsins it*. For he puts it into another Rank and Order of Actions, asserts its Legality, and so confounds the essential Differences of Mens Manners; which is directly *to call Evil, Good*; the Thing which God declares himself so peculiarly to abominate. Such are properly the Devil's Advocates. For he who does the Part of an Advocate, pleads not for Mercy upon Breach of Law confessed; (for this were properly to *beg*, and not to *plead*;) but he alledges, that the Law is not broke; and that therefore upon Terms of Justice his Cause is Good, and consequently needs no Pardon, but pleads Right on his Side. In like manner, whosoever manages the Devil's Cause, by defending an ill Action, in *pleading* for that, he does by Consequence *implead the Law*; to which he endeavours to reconcile it. For if that be not *against the Law*, neither can the Law be *against that*: So that, by this Means, the Divine *Precept* becomes a Party in the Crime, and the Rule itself a Transgressor. To defend Sin, is to justify it, and to *justify* it, is to *pronounce for it according to Sentence of Law*; and that surely is to condemn the Law. An higher Affront than which, cannot be passed upon the great Author

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Author and Giver of it. Yet ſuch Wretches both have been, and ſtill are found in the World. Some of which have dared to argue for their Debauchery from *Principles* (ſome call them Oracles) *of Reaſon*, and ſome again have been ſo unſufferably Prophane, as to throw Scripture itſelf in the Face of God, by pleading it in behalf of their Leudneſs, I ſhall not alledge Inſtances, and am ſorry that I can: But God knows, what pitiful Reaſoners, what forelorn Diſputants ſuch ſhew themſelves, while they plead Reaſon for that which contradicts Reaſon, and alledge Scripture in Oppoſition to *Religion*. Nothing I am ſure can be pleaded for them; nor perhaps do ſuch Perſons think, that their Actions need either *Plea* or *Pardon*. For that which may be *defended*, certainly needs not to be *pardoned*; and therefore, if they will venture Things upon this Iſſue, and caſt all upon the Merits of the Cauſe, they muſt thank themſelves, if, at the laſt and great Judgment, God ſends them away with no other Sentence but this: That as they have *defended their Sins*, ſo let them now *ſee*, whether *their Sins can defend them*.

3. The third and laſt Degree of *Shameleſneſs* in Sin, is *to glory in it*. And higher than this

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this the Corruption of Man's Nature (as corrupt as it is) cannot possibly go; though, the Truth is, this may seem to proceed, not so much from a Corruption of it, as from something that is a direct Contradiction to it. For can any Thing in Nature incline a Man to glory in his *Imperfections?* To pride and plume himself in his Deformities? Was ever any one yet seen to boast of a Blear-Eye, or a Crook-Back? And are not the Defects of the Soul, by so much the more ugly, by how much the Soul is naturally more noble than the Body? And the Faculties of one more excellent than the Shape and Lineaments of the other?

Yet some there are, who have shook off Reason and Humanity so far, as to proclaim and trumpet out those *Villanies upon the House-Tops*, which, such as sin but at an ordinary Rate of Wickedness, commit only in the *Corners* of them; *They declare their Sin as* Sodom, *and hide it not.* As the Prophet says in *Isa.* iii. 9. And as the Apostle expresses it to the Height, *Phil.* iii. 19. *They glory in their Shame.* A Thing as much against Nature, as it can be against Religion; and full as contrary to the Course and Dictates of the one, as to the most confessed Rules of the other.

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other. Nevertheleſs, ſuch Monſters there are. For may we not hear ſome vaunting, what Quantities of Drink they can pour down? And how many *weak Brethren* they have in ſuch heroick Pot-Combats laid under the *Table?* And do not others report with Pleaſure and Oſtentation, how dexterouſly they have over-reached their well-meaning Neighbour? How neatly they have gulled him of his Eſtate, or abuſed him in his Bed? And laſtly, have not ſome arrived to that frontleſs and horrid Impudence, as to ſay openly, *That they hoped to live to ſee the Day, in which an honeſt Woman, or a vertuous Man ſhould be aſhamed to ſhew their Head in Company.* How long ſuch Perſons may *live* I know not; how long they *deſerve to live*, it is eaſy to tell. And I dare confidently affirm, that it is as much the Concern of Government, and the Peace of a Nation, that the Utterers of ſuch Things ſhould be laid hold on by the Hand of Publick Juſtice, as it can be to put to Death a Thief or an Highwayman, or any ſuch common Malefactor. For this is publickly to ſet up a Standard in the behalf of Vice, to wear its Colours, and avowedly to aſſert and eſpouſe the Cauſe of it, in Defiance of all that is ſacred or civil, moral

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moral or religious. I must confess, I am *ashamed* thus to lay open Mens *Want of Shame*. But whosoever they are, who are come to this Height, let them know, that they are *consummate* in Vice, and upon all Accounts so unspeakably bad, that the Devil himself can neither *make* nor *wish* them worse. And thus much for the third Thing proposed, *Which was to shew the several Degrees of Shamelessness in Sin.* Pass we now to the

4*th.* Which is *to shew the Reasons, Why it brings down Judgment and Destruction upon the Sinner.* I shall assign Two.

1. Because *Shamelessness in Sin* always *presupposes those Actions* and Courses which God rarely suffers to go unpunished. It presupposes them, I say, as the proper Causes from which this Shamelessness does proceed. For I have shewn, that *great and heinous Crimes, Custom in Sinning, the criminal Examples of great Ones, together with a general and received Practice of Vice,* are the Ways and Means by which the Heart of Man comes to be hardened against all Sense of, and Shame for Sin. But now every one of these does most particularly sollicit, and call upon God for Justice, and put the Weapons of Vengeance into his Hands; so that Shamelessness in

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Sin provokes and draws down Wrath in the Strength and Stock of that Guilt, which a Man always contracts, before he can *come to be ſhameleſs.*

2. The other Reaſon, Why Shameleſneſs in Sin brings down the Divine Judgments upon Men, is from the deſtructive Influence which it has upon the Government of the World. For the better underſtanding of which, we muſt obſerve, that God, the wiſe and righteous Governor of the Univerſe, finds it neceſſary in the Courſe of his Providence to puniſh *ſome Sins, even in* this Life. Such as are *Murders, Perjuries, Adulteries, groſs Falſhoods, and the like;* and generally all ſuch Crimes as have in them a peculiar Tendency to overthrow Government, and common Society amongſt Men. In the Number of which, (if we may call it one Kind of Sin, and not rather a general Preparative to all Sin) we may reckon this *Shameleſneſs in Sinning.* It is an Obſervation frequent in *Machiavel*, *That when there is a general Depravation and Corruption of the Manners of any People, that Government cannot ſtand.* And it is manifeſt, that the Integrity of Mens Manners cannot be ſecured, where there is not preſerved upon Mens Minds a true Eſtimate of

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of *Vice and Vertue*; that is, where Vice is not looked upon as shameful and opprobrious, and Vertue valued as worthy and honourable. But now, where Vice walks with a daring Front, and no Shame attends the Practice, or the Practicers of it, there is an utter Confusion of the first dividing and distinguishing Properties of Mens Actions; Morality falls to the Ground, and Government must quickly follow. For if Vertue comes once to be hissed and exploded, and forced to hide its Head, What can recommend it, with all its Rigours, to the Choice and Practice of Mankind? since it is not imaginable, that Men will take Pains to abridge and restrain the unruly Appetites of their Nature, when no other Reward shall follow all these Severities, but Scorn and Reproach. And if, on the other side, all these Appetites should be left fully at Liberty to take their own exorbitant Satisfaction, how shall Government support itself? And how shall Laws be able to subsist, where the Violation of them is become *creditable*, and brings an Esteem to the Violators? This is most certain, that there *can be no Fence against Vice got into Reputation*; especially when the Vice acts also in the Strength of a mighty

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natural Propensity to it. For in this Case, it rushes in upon Society like a Torrent or Inundation with a furious Storm driving it on; and Vertue must either swim against Wind and Tide too, that is both against the Struggles of *Appetite*, and the Discountenance of the *World* besides; or it must sink, and be swallowed up in the prevailing Stream of a contrary Practice. *Honour is the Birthright of Vertue, and Shame of Vice.* But if these come to be shifted and transplaced, so that Honour still waits on Vice, and Shame on Vertue, Government becomes presently like a curious Engine torn in pieces, by the violent Motion of its own Springs and Wheels disordered or misplaced.

And whenever it comes to fare thus with any civil State, Vertue and Common Honesty seem to make their Appeal to the Supream Governor of all Things, to take the Matter into his own Hands, and to correct those clamorous Enormities, which are grown too big and strong for *Law* or *Shame*, or any humane *Coercion*. And accordingly God often finds himself engaged by some notable Judgment to assert and declare his Sovereignty, and to convince insolent and audacious Sinners, that where Shame *ends*, Vengeance

Vengeance *must begin*, or the Government of the World ceaſe; and that if Men will not *ſee*, they muſt be made to *feel* the Difference between *Vice* and *Vertue*. For where Nature and Religion find themſelves too weak to redreſs the Extravagance of Mens Manners, a Blow from Heaven muſt do the Buſineſs, or the Societies of the World muſt fall into Confuſion and Diſſolution. But the great Judge and Ruler of all Things, who even for his own Honour, has undertook the Protection of *Law*, *Order*, and *Juſtice* here below, ſo long as he ſuffers the World to *ſtand*, will not ſuffer theſe to *fall*. And therefore, when Vice is got above all Cure, and ſcorns all the Corrections which *Fear and Shame* can apply, God lays hold on Judgment, makes bare his Arm, and by doing juſtice upon daring Sinners, does then moſt eminently do juſtice to his own Providence too. And thus much for the 4th Thing propoſed, *which was to ſhew, The Reaſons why Shameleſneſs in Sin brings down Judgment and Deſtruction upon the Sinner.* I deſcend now to the

5th and *Laſt*. *Which is to ſhew, What thoſe Judgments are, by which it procures the Sinner's Ruin and Deſtruction.* And for this,

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it must be confessed, that they neither are, nor can be particularly known to any, but to him, who alone knows the wise and deep Counsels of his own Will, the great *Rule* and *Compass* which his *Providence* steers by. Nevertheless, so far as his *Word* dictates, we may safely pronounce; and what we find recorded in that, to have been done by God upon such Kind of Sinners formerly, we may warrantably inferr, is the most likely to be done by him again.

Now I shall instance in three several Sorts of Judgments, which we read in Scripture to have been inflicted upon shameless Sinners. As

1. A *sudden* and *disasterous* Death; and indeed Suddenness in this can hardly be without Disaster: When the *Israelites* made that wicked Combination with the *Moabites*, we find *Zimri* one of the Princes of the People leading *Cozbi* an infamous Strumpet into his Tent before *Moses*, and all the Congregation looking on, with weeping Eyes, and bleeding Hearts. This surely was Impudence in the Height; Impudence (as it were) working up to a full Crisis. And we know, how quickly the Divine Justice revenged it upon them by the Sword of *Phinehas*,

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has, and such a sudden unlooked for Execution, as dispatched them both into another *World* without either Space or Power of repenting for what they had done *in this*.

2. Another Sort of Judgment, is *War and Desolation*. In the *xixth* and *xxth* Chapters of the Book of *Judges*, we read what a detestable Piece of Villany was acted by some of the *Benjamites*. And when Satisfaction was demanded of them, the whole Tribe abets the Villany, and the Villains too; they own the Defence of both with Sword in Hand; they fight for an Action not fit to *be named*, and plead the Cause of their Leudness both with their Guilt and their Blood too about their Ears. And was not this to be Proof against all Shame? For could there be a more absolute and professed Homage paid to Vice, than thus to march under its Banner, and to fight its Battles? But what's the Consequence of all this? Why a whole Tribe is almost cut off and destroyed by a fatal Civil War; and such a sweeping Overthrow and Slaughter of that infamous Army, as may for ever be a convincing Lesson to such shameless Wretches, how ill they consult for themselves, who shed that Blood,

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which should *blush* for Sin, in the *foul* and *odious Defence* of it.

3. A third Sort of Judgment is *Captivity*. Which was that, here denounced by the Prophet in the Text, against the Men of *Israel*, now grown past Shame. And a severe one it was certainly. When the proud and fierce Armies of the *Assyrians* came up against *Jerusalem*, sacked the City, and laid the Temple even with the Ground; and upon an absolute and entire Conquest, carried away the Inhabitants Captive into *Babylon*. Shameless (it seems) they had been in their Sin, and therefore God would make them taste what *Shame* was in their Punishment; in those bitter Taunts and Contumelies which always pass upon the Conquered from an insolent and victorious Enemy. Conquest and Captivity are perhaps the bittereſt Cup that Vengeance can put into the Hands of a sinful People. *David* chose the Plague and Pestilence before it, as the lesser Evil, and the gentler Infliction of the two. And he who shall consider the Rage, and lawless Fury of a conquering invading Army, needs no other Account of the Calamities of the Vanquished. No Respect to the Aged, no Compassion to the Infant; in a word, the *Assyrians*

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Assyrians were as shameless in their *Cruelties*, as the *Jews* had been in *their Sins*; which made the whole Visitation, not only a *just*, but also a *suitable* Revenge.

And thus we have seen what those Judgments are, which God from Time to Time has inflicted upon bold and profligate Offenders; and are we now sure, that none of all these are kept in Reserve for us? The Text begins with the *Charge of Shamelessness*, and ends with the *Denunciation* of *Judgment*; and shall we be able (think we) to divide and separate the latter Part of it from the former, the Effect from the Cause, and while we bring ourselves under One, wholly to escape the Other? How home the Charge reaches us, has been made out, by shewing, with what high Impudence some amongst us defend Sin, and with what undaunted Confidence others live in it; and lastly, with what Patronage others countenance it. So that Vice has clearly got the Victory, and carried it against all Opposition. It rides on successfully and gloriously, lives magnificently, and fares deliciously every Day; and all this in the Face of God and Man, without either Fear of one, or Shame of the other. Nay, so far are our Modern Sinners

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from ſneaking under their Guilt, that they ſcorn to *hide*, or ſo much as *hold down* their *Head* for leſs Crimes, than many others *have loſt theirs*. Such a Rampancy of Vice has this Age of abuſed Mercies, or rather Miracles, brought *England* to. While, on the other hand, the Widows and Orphans of many brave and worthy Perſons, who had both done and ſuffered honourably for their Prince, their Church, and their Country, as a Reward for all this, live in Want and Miſery, and a diſmal Lack of all Things, becauſe they had rather work or *beg*, do or ſuffer any Thing, than *ſin* for their *Bread*. This is our preſent Caſe; and being ſo, do thoſe thriving Wretches know, that this their proſperous and (therefore) contagious Leudneſs, may not be preparing for us the *Fire and Faggot*, or provoking God to pour in a *Foreign domineering* Enemy upon us, an Enemy whom we have been always ſo ſottiſhly fond of; for hardly any other Judgment remains yet untryed upon the Nation? This ſurely, it is natural and reaſonable enough to imagine, that *ſuch as thus glory in their Shame* (be they never ſo High and Great) *ſhould have Shame and Confuſion caſt upon their Glory*. My Buſineſs, I confeſs, hitherto has been to diſcourſe

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discourse upon the *Prophet*'s Words, and I heartily wish, that, in so doing, I may not prove too much a *Prophet* myself.

But whether Things may so happen to us or no, and that this notorious, and almost National Impudence in Sin should ever bring down any of the forementioned Judgments upon us, (which God in Mercy avert) one Judgment, I am sure, it will infallibly bring along with it, and that is *itself*. And can there be a dreadfuller Judgment than *that*, which gives a Man an universal Disposition to all Sin? Which offers up his Soul, as it were, a Blank to the Devil, to write *what he will upon it?* Of all the Curses which can possibly befall a Sinner, there is none comparable to this. That he should *add Iniquity to Iniquity, and fall from Sin to Sin*; which the shameless Person cannot but do, till he falls by it too: His Recovery, while under that Character, being utterly impossible. For where there is no Place *for Shame*, there can be none for *Repentance*. Shamelessness naturally and necessarily seals a Man up under *Impenitence*, and Impenitence seals him up to Destruction. God of his infinite Goodness *work better Minds in us*,

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us, which he muſt, and will do, if he intends *better Things for us.*

To whom be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

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Concealment of Sin no Security to the Sinner:

IN A

DISCOURSE

UPON

NUMBERS XXXII. 23.

Latter Part of the Verse.

---Be sure your Sin will find you out.

OF all the Ways to be taken for the Prevention of *that* great Plague of Mankind, *Sin*, there is none so rational and efficacious, as to confute and baffle *those Motives*, by which *Men* are induced to *venture* upon it; and amongst all such Motives, the *Heart of Man* seems chiefly to be *over-powered*, and prevailed upon by *Two*;

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Two; to wit, *Secrecy in committing Sin*, and *Impunity* consequent upon it.

Accordingly, *Moses*, in this Chapter, having to deal with a Company of Men suspected guilty of a base and fraudulent *Design*, though couched under a very fair *Pretence*, (as most such Designs use to be) he endeavours to dash it in its very Conception; by particularly applying himself to encounter those *secret Ratiocinations* and Arguments, which he knew were the most likely to encourage them in it; and this he does very *briefly*, but *effectually*, by assuring them, that how *covertly* and *artificially* soever they might carry on their *dark Project*, yet their *Sin should* infallibly *find them out*.

The Subject and Occasion of the Words is indeed *Particular*, but the Design of them is manifestly of an *Universal Import*; as reaching the Case of all Sinners in the World, in their first Entrance upon any sinful Act or Course. And therefore, I shall consider them according to this latter and more enlarged Sense; casting the Prosecution of them under these three following *Heads*: As

First, I shall shew, *That Men generally*, if not *always*, proceed to the Commission of Sin, upon

upon a ſecret *Confidence* of *Concealment*, or *Impunity*.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew, The *Grounds* and *Reaſons*, upon which Men take up ſuch a *Confidence*. And

Thirdly and *Laſtly*, I ſhall ſhew, The *Vanity* of this *Confidence*, by declaring thoſe *ſeveral Ways*, by which, in the Iſſue, it comes certainly to be *defeated*.

Of each of which in their Order.

1ſt, *And firſt for the firſt of them*; to wit, *That Men generally, if not always, proceed to the Commiſſion of Sin, upon a ſecret Confidence of Concealment or Impunity.*

For the better handling of which Propoſition, I ſhall lay down theſe two *Aſſertions*.

1. That no Man is induced to *Sin*, conſidered *in itſelf*, as a Thing *abſolutely*, *or meerly Evil*, but as it bears ſome *Reſemblance* or *Appearance* of Good, in the Apprehenſions of him who commits it. Certain it is, that there can be no *real Good* in *Sin*; but if it had no Shadow, no Shew of *Good*, it could not poſſibly be made the Object of an *Humane Choice*; the Will of Man never *chooſing*, or embracing any Thing under the proper No-

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tion of *Evil*. But then, as to the *Kind* of this *Good*; if we would know, what that is, it is also *as certain*, that no Man can be so far deluded, or rather besotted in his Judgment, as to imagine, that *Sin* can have any Thing of *Moral Good* in it; forasmuch as that imports a direct *Contradiction* to the very *Nature*, *Notion*, and *Definition* of *Sin*; and therefore besides that, *Philosophy*, we know, owns and asserts two other Sorts of *Good*, to wit, *pleasing* and *profitable*: *Good* being properly the Denomination of a Thing, as it suits with our Desires or Inclinations. According to which Acception of the Word, whatsoever *pleases or profits* us, may, upon that General Account, be called *Good*; though otherwise it swerves from the stated Rules and Laws of Honesty and Morality. And upon the same Ground, Sin itself, so far as it carries either *Pleasure or Profit* with it, is capable of being *apprehended* by the Mind of Man as *good*; and consequently of being *chosen* or embraced by the *Will* as such.

2. The other *Assertion* to be laid down, is, That God has annexed *two great Evils* to every Sin, in Opposition to the *Pleasure* and *Profit* of it; to wit, *Shame* and *Pain*. He has

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has by an eternal, and most righteous Decree, made *these two* the inseparable *Effects* and *Consequents* of Sin. They are the *Wages* assigned it by the Laws of Heaven; so that whosoever commits it, ought to account *Shame* and *Punishment* to belong to him, as his Rightful Inheritance. For it is God who has joined them together by an *irreversible Sentence*; and it is not in the Power or Art of Man to put them asunder. And now, as God has made these *two Evils*, the sure *Consequents of Sin*, so there is nothing which the Nature of Man does so peculiarly dread and abhorr, as these; they being indeed the most directly and absolutely Destructive of all its Enjoyments; forasmuch as they reach and confound it in the *adequate Subject* of Enjoyment, the *Soul* and *Body*; *Shame* being properly the Torment of the one, and *Pain* of the other. For the Mind of Man can have no Taste or Relish of any Pleasure in the World, while it is actually oppressed and overwhelmed with *Shame*; nothing does so keenly and intolerably affect the Soul, as Infamy: It drinks up, and consumes the *Quickness*, the *Gayety*, and *Activity* of the Spirits: It *dejects the Countenance*, made by God himself to *look upwards*; so that this noble

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noble Creature, the Master-Piece of the Creation, dares not so much as *lift up* either his *Head* or his *Thoughts*; but it is a Vexation to him even to *look* upon others, and yet a greater to be *looked upon* by them. And as *Shame* thus mortifies the Soul, so *Pain* or *Punishment* (the other Twin-Effect of Sin) equally harasses the Body. We know, how much Misery *Pain* is able to bring upon the Body in this Life; (in which our *Pains* and *Pleasures*, as well as other Things, are but imperfect;) there being never a Limb or Part, never a Vein or Artery of the Body, but it is the Scene and Receptacle of Pain; whensoever it shall please God to unfence it, and let in some sharp Disease or Distemper upon it. And so exceedingly afflictive are these *Bodily Griefs*, that there is nothing which affects the Body in the *Way* of *Pleasure*, in any Degree comparable to that which *affects* it in the *Way* of *Pain*. For is there any Pleasure in Nature, which equals the Impressions of the *Gout*, the *Stone*, or even of the *Tooth-ake* itself? But then further, when we shall consider, that the Pains which we have here mentioned, and a great many more, are but the *Preludiums*, the *First-Fruits*, and Beginnings of that *Pain*, which

which shall be infinitely advanced, and finally compleated in the Torments of another World; when the Body shall descend into a Bed of *Fire and Brimstone*, and be lodged for ever in the burning Furnace of an *Almighty* Wrath; This Consideration surely *will*, or *ought to* satisfy us, that God will not be behind-hand with the Sinner in point of *Punishment*, whatsoever *Promises* his Sin may have made him in point of *Pleasure*.

And now, if we put these *two Assertions*, laid down by us, together. As first, *That no Man ever engages in Sin, but as he apprehends in it something of Pleasure or Advantage.* And secondly, *That Shame and Pain are by God himself made the assured Consequents of Sin*; which are utterly Inconsistent with, and Destructive of all such Pleasure or Advantage. It must needs follow from hence, that the *Will* cannot possibly *choose Sin*, so long as the *Understanding* is under a full Conviction or Persuasion, that *Shame* and *Punishment* shall certainly follow the Commission of it. For no Man, doubtless, is so furiously bent upon his *Lust*, or any other infamous *Passion*, as to attempt the Satisfaction of it in the *Market-Place*, or in the Face of the

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Sun, and of the World, or with the Sword of the Avenger applyed to his Heart.

Covetousness (we all know) is a *blinding*, as well as a *pressing*, and a *bold Vice*; yet certainly it could never *blind*, nor infatuate any one to that Degree, as to make a *Judge* take a *Bribe* upon the *Bench*, or in the open Sight of the *Court*. No; no Man is so far able to conquer, and cast off those *innate Fears*, which Nature has thought fit to *bridle*, and govern the Fury of his Affections by, as to bid Defiance to an Evil, which his best and strongest Reasonings assure him to be unsupportable; and therefore his Apprehensions must be, some Way or other, first unshackled from a Belief of these *Evils*, before his *Will*, and his *Choice*, can be let loose to the Practice of Sin. And does not this give us a most *Philosophical*, as well as true Account of the infinite Reasonableness of the Scripture's charging all *Sin* upon *Unbelief*, as the first *Root* and *Source* of Mens Apostacy from God? For let Men think and say what they will, yet when they venture upon Sin, they do not really believe, that God will ever revenge it upon them: They may indeed have some general, faint, speculative Belief of *Hell* and *Damnation*; but such a

Belief

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Belief as is Particular and Practical, and Perſonally applies, and brings it Home to their own Condition, this they are void of; and it is againſt the Methods of Reaſon and Nature, for any Man to commit Sin with ſuch a Belief full and freſh upon his Spirit: And conſequently, the Heart muſt prevaricate and ſhift off theſe Perſuaſions, the beſt it can, in order to its free Paſſage to Sin; and this can by no other Means be ſo effectually done, as by promiſing itſelf *Secrecy in Sin*, and *Impunity*, or *Eſcape* after it. For theſe two reach and remove all a Man's Fears, by giving him Security againſt thoſe two grand terrifying Effects of Sin, *Shame* and *Pain*. Aſſure but the Sinner, that he ſhall neither be *diſcovered*, nor *puniſhed*, and preſently the Reins lie looſe upon all his Appetites; and they are free to take their full Swing in all Enormities whatſoever. But yet, ſince this is not to be effected without the Help of ſome Arguments and Conſiderations, which may have ſomething of Shew, at leaſt, to *delude*, though nothing of Strength to convince the Reaſon: Therefore,

2*dly*, We ſhall now, under our *next Head*, endeavour to give ſome Account of thoſe fallacious Grounds, upon which the Sinner is

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apt to take up such a Confidence, as to believe, that he shall be able to carry off his Sin clear, without either *Discovery* or *Retribution*. And, no doubt, weak and shallow enough we shall find them all; and such as could never persuade any Man to sin, did not his own Love to Sin persuade him much more forcibly than all such Considerations; some of which are these that follow. As

1. *First, Men consider* the Success which they have actually had in the Commission of many Sins; and this proves an encouraging Argument to them to commit the same for the future; as naturally suggesting this to their Thoughts, that what *they have done so often*, without either *Discovery* or *Punishment*, may be so done by them again. For nothing does so much confirm a Man in the Continuance of any Practice, as frequent Experience of Success in what he does; the proper genuine Result of this being *Confidence*.

Some Men indeed stumble in their very first *Entrance* upon a sinful Course; and this their Disappointment frequently proves their Cure, by making them to retreat and draw off timely, as being disheartened with so unfortunate a Beginning. And it is (no doubt) the

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the ſingular Mercy and Indulgence of God to ſuch, thus to croſs and turn them out of the *Paths of Deſtruction*; which had they found ſmooth, ſafe, and pleaſurable, the Corruption of their Hearts would have infallibly engaged them in them to their Lives End. That Traveller, ſurely, has but little Cauſe to complain, who by breaking a Leg, or an Arm, at his firſt ſetting out upon an unfortunate Journey, prevents the loſing of his Head at his Journey's End; it being but a very uncomfortable Way of Travelling, to finiſh one's Journey, and one's Life together. Great Reaſon, therefore, have they to own themſelves particularly favoured by Providence, who have been ſtopped, and withſtood by it, in the very firſt Attempts of any Sin, and thereby ſnatched (as it were a Brand) out of the Fire, or (which is yet better) have been kept from ever *falling into it*: Their being *ſcorched* has prevented their being *burnt*. While the Fright, cauſed by the Danger they ſo narrowly eſcaped, has been always freſh upon their Memories; and ſuch as come to be thus happily *frighted into their Wits*, are not ſo eaſily fooled out of them again. In ſhort, all Fruſtration in the firſt Eſſays of a vicious Courſe, is a Baulk to

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the Confidence of the bold Undertaker. And therefore, on the contrary, when God is pleased to leave a Man under the *full Sway* and *Power of any Vice*, he does not concern his Providence to lay any Block or Impediment in such an one's Way, but suffers him to go on and *succeed* in his *Villany*, to effect all his Projects, and compass the full Satisfaction of his *Leud Desires*. And this flushes him up, and makes him hard and *insensible*; and that makes him venturous and daring; and so locks him fast in the Embraces of his Sin, while he has not the least Surmise of the Sadness of the Issue, and that the *present Sweets* of Sin will, and must be *Bitterness in the End*; but, like a Sot in a Tavern, first drinks himself drunk, and then forgets that there is a Reckoning to be paid.

Such an one, the Devil accounts he has fast enough; and for that Cause, none shall so studiously endeavour to promote a Man's *Quiet* and *Success* in Sin, as he, who at present *tempts* him to it, and will hereafter *torment* him for it. For the Devil desires not, that the Sinner should feel any Trouble for Sin, till he comes to feel it for Good and All in *that Place*, which is designed only for *Payment*,

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Payment, and not *Amendment*; and where all that he can do or ſuffer to eternal Ages, can contribute nothing to his *Releaſe*. And therefore, that the Sinner may *ſleep on* ſoundly in his Sin, the *Devil* will be ſure to make his *Bed ſoft enough*. It is ſaid of the *Spaniard*, that there are two Things much accounted of, and deſired by many in the World, which yet he heartily wiſhes his Enemy; one is, that if he be a *Gameſter*, he may win; the other, that if he be a *Courter* of Women, he may obtain his Deſires; for that he knows well enough, that either of theſe Courſes will, in all likelihood, prove his Undoing at long Run. In like manner, when the Devil has the Management of a Sinner, he will ſpread his Wing over him ſo, that he ſhall never be alarmed with Dangers, Diſgraces, and other calamitous Effects of Sin, (if the officious Tempter can ward them off) but ſhall purſue his Vice with Eaſe, Safety, and Reputation.

And while the Sinner can do ſo, ſuch is the Proneneſs of Man by Nature to *deceive himſelf* in a Thing, which he paſſionately *deſires*, that having thus acquitted himſelf to himſelf, he takes it for granted, that God will acquit him too; and like our late *ſan-*

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ctified, and since *justified* Rebels, concludes, that God and he (forsooth) are still of a Mind: In *Eccles.* viii. 11. *Because* (says the wise Man) *Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do Evil.* Here he gives us an Account of the *secret Reasoning* of most Sinners *Hearts*; namely, that because God does not confound them in the very *Act of Sin*, by some *immediate Judgment*, therefore they resolve upon a more audacious Progress in it; and so sing *Agag*'s *Requiem* to themselves, *That surely the Bitterness of Death is past:* But much *surer* will such find it, that no Man's being *past Fear*, makes him past *Feeling* too; nor, that the Distance of an *Evil* abates the *Certainty* of it; and yet, the great *Knower of Hearts* ascribes Mens Resolution to sin, to such Reasonings as these, (as sottish and absurd as they are) so that in the 50th *Psalm*, having reckoned up several flagitious Practices, he adds, in the 21*st* Verse; *These Things hast thou done, and I kept Silence, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* God's *Silence* (it seems) passes with such, for his *Consent*, and his not attacking the guilty Wretch by a present Execution, makes him

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him conclude, that Heaven has *passed an Act of Oblivion* upon all his Rogueries, so that henceforth he shall live and die a prosperous *indemnified Villain*, and *his Sin never find him out*. In which Case, certainly for a *Sinner* thus to presume *to absolve himself from his own Sins*, is itself a greater Sin than any of those which he can pretend to absolve himself from. But

2. *A second Ground*, upon which Men are apt to persuade themselves, that they shall escape the Stroke of Divine Justice for their Sins, is their Observation of the great and flourishing Condition of some of the *topping Sinners* of the World. They have seen *Perjury* and *Murder* nestle themselves into a *Throne*, *live* triumphant, and *die* peaceably; And this makes them question, whether God will ever concern himself to *revenge* that hereafter, which he seems so much to *connive at*, and *countenance* here; especially, since Men are so generally apt to judge of *Things* and *Persons* according to the present *Face* and Appearance of them, that they make the *Present*, the sole Measure of the *Future*, guide their *Hopes* and their *Fears*, by what they actually *see* and *feel*; and in a word, make their *outward Senses*, the

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the Rule and Ground of their *inmoſt Ratiocinations*.

For could we hear the *ſecret Language* of moſt Mens Thoughts, we ſhould hear them making ſuch Kind of *Anſwers and Replies* to the Checks of Conſcience diſſuading them from Sin, and laying the Danger of it before them, as theſe: Pray, what Miſchief befell ſuch an *Oppreſſor*, ſuch a *Tyrant*, or ſuch a *Rebel?* And who paſſed his Life with more *Affluence* and *Jollity*, than ſuch an *Epicure*, *ſuch a Money-Monger*, *ſuch a Tally-Broker*, and Cheater of the *Publick?* And have not ſome dexterous *Accomptants* got Eſtates, and made their Fortunes by a clever Stroke or two of their Pen? And by a *skilful Miſtake*, wrote themſelves 40 or 50 thouſand Pounds richer then they were before, in a Trice? And did not that diſcreet *Roman Verres* lighting into a Wealthy-Province, plunder and carry off from thence enough to ſerve *himſelf*, his *Friends*, and his *Judges* too? And why may not others, *whoſe Parts lie the ſame Way*, follow ſuch lucky Examples? And the *thriving Hypocrites of the preſent Age* find as *fair Quarter* from God and Man, as any of *the former?* With ſuch *Conſiderations* as theſe, (if they may be called ſo) Men

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commonly arm themſelves againſt all the *Threatnings* of the Divine Judgments; and think that, in the Strength of them, they can warrant the moſt reſolute Purſuit of their *Vices* for ſafe and rational. They ſee not the Smoke of the *bottomleſs Pit*, and ſo *dread not* the Fire.

Flouriſhing Sinners are indeed plauſible Arguments to induce Men to Sin: But, thanks be to God, that for a Sinner to *ſpend and end his Days flouriſhing*, is a Privilege allowed by him to very few; and thoſe only ſuch, as are likely to be much *lower* in the other World, than ever they were *high* in this. But

3. *As we have ſhewn*, how mightily Men are heartened on to their Sins, by the *ſucceſsful Examples* of others, *as bad* as themſelves, or perhaps *worſe*; ſo the next Ground, upon which ſuch are wont to promiſe themſelves *Security*, both from the Diſcovery and Puniſhment of their Sins, is the Opinion which they have of *their* own ſingular Art and Cunning to conceal them from the *Knowledge*; or, at leaſt, of their *Power* to reſcue them from the *Juriſdiction* of any Earthly *Judge*. The *Eye of Man*, they know, is but of a weak Sight, and a ſhort *Reach*; ſo

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ſo that he neither ſees in the *Dark*, nor pierces into the *Cabinet-Council*, and *Corner-Practices* of his Neighbours; and therefore, theſe *Sons of Darkneſs*, who love to *work*, as well as *walk* in the *Dark*, doubt not, but to contrive and caſt the Commiſſion of their Villanies under ſuch ſure Coverts of *Secrecy*, that they ſhall be able to laugh at all *Judges* and *Witneſſes*, and defy the Inſpection of the moſt curious and exact Enquirers. And this makes them proceed to ſin with ſuch *Bravadoes* in their Hearts as theſe: Who ſhall ever ſee, or hear, or know what I do? The *Sun* itſelf, the *Eye of the World*, ſhall never be conſcious to my Actions; even the *Light* and the *Day* ſhall be Strangers to my Retirements. So that, unleſs the Stones I tread upon, cry out againſt me, and the *Beam out of the Wall accuſe*, and my own Cloaths *arraign* me, I fear no Diſcovery: This is the Language, theſe the inward *Boaſts* of *ſecret*, or rather *ſelf-befooled* Sinners.

But now, what if ſuch ſtrange Things as theſe ſhould ſometimes come to paſs? And it ſhould ſo fall out, (as it will appear by and by) that even theſe dumb, inanimate Things are ſometimes unaccountably enabled to clamour and depoſe againſt the guilty Wretch;

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Wretch; so that, to the Amazement of the World, he is drawn forth into *publick View*, out of all his lurking Holes, and *Pavilions of Darkness*; why then, upon such surprizing Accidents as these, some have yet a *further Asylum* to fly to, and reckon that their *Power and Interest* shall protect them; and so secure the Sinner, notwithstanding the Discovery of the Sin. And the Truth is, if Matters stand so with them, that the *Height* of their *Condition* equals the *Height* of their *Crimes*, what care such *ungodly Great* Ones, whether or no their Sins *are known*, so long as their Persons must *not be touched?* No, so far are such from *excusing* or *covering* their *lawless Practices*, that they choose rather to *own* and *wear them* in the *Eye of the World*, as Badges of their *Power*, and Marks of such a *Greatness*, as has set itself above the Reach of either *Shame* or *Fear*; even *Treason* itself dreads not a Discovery, if the over-grown Traytor be but mighty enough to bear it out; but it shall *walk Abroad* openly, and look the World in the Face undauntedly, with all the *Consciousness* of a clamorous *Guilt*, and yet with the Confidence of *Innocence* itself. For we must know, that it is not *meer Guilt*, but Guilt *weak and disarmed*, which exposes an Offender

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Offender to the Merits of his Offence; they are only the *minorum gentium malefici*, *Malefactors* of a *lower Form*, who break the Law, and are *hanged for it*. Whereas, let a Crime be never so foul, and so notorious, yet if the wary *Criminal* has so armed and encompassed himself with *Friends* and *Money*, as to stave off all Approaches of *Justice*, howsoever his *Sin may find him out*, yet he persuades himself, that his *Punishment cannot*; and that is as much as he cares for. For a *Man's Debts* will never fright him, if the *Officer* dares not *arrest* him; and he *will* hardly fear *breaking* the Law, who knows, that he can *trample* upon it too. But

4. *The fourth and last Ground* (which I shall mention) of Mens promising themselves Security from the Punishment of their Sins, is a strong Presumption, *that they shall be able to repent, and make their Peace with God when they please*; and this, they fully reckon, will keep them *safe*, and effectually shut the Door against their *utmost Fears*, as being a Reach beyond them all. For let a Man be never so deeply possessed with a Belief of God's *sin-revenging Justice*, never so much persuaded, that all the Wrath, which the *Curse of the Law* can threaten or inflict, is

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most certainly entailed, not upon Sin only in general, but also upon his own Sin in particular; nay, let Damnation be always present to his Thoughts, and the Fire of Hell continually flaming in his Apprehensions, yet all this shall not be able to take him off from his Resolution to Sin, and his Confidence of Escape, because he has an Argument in Reserve, which he thinks will answer all, to wit, an *After-Repentance*; for if this shall interpose between the *Commission of Sin*, and the *Punishment of it*, he concludes, upon the Stock of all God's *Promises to the Penitent*, that he is past Danger; and consequently, has *outwitted* the *Law* and *the Curse*, and so stands *rectus in curiâ*, in spite of all the Threatnings of *Death* and *Damnation*.

And as he thus reckons, that *Repentance* will secure him, so he doubts not, but he can command that when he will; as according to the Doctrine of *Pelagius*, and his Modern admired Followers, he certainly may; *Repentance* in their Divinity being a Work entirely in the Power of the Sinner's Will. So that now the Sinner's main Business must be to *time* his *Repentance* artificially, and to retreat opportunely, before the Hand of Vengeance be actually upon him: And if he

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can but prevent, and be too nimble for that; why then, he comes off clear and ſucceſsful, with Flying Colours, having enjoyed the *Pleaſures* and *Advantages* of his Sin, without enduring any Thing of the *Smart*, or ſad Conſequences of the ſame.

But now, how wretched an Inference this is, for any Man to form to himſelf, and thereby to mock and defy Heaven! and yet how deep it lies in the Hearts of moſt Sinners, may eaſily be obſerved by Men of Senſe; and will be ſadly rued by ſuch as are not ſo, when it is too late. For this *is* manifeſtly the great Fort and Caſtle, the *Cittadel* and *ſtrong Tower*, which the Soul has built to itſelf, to repair to, whenſoever it has a Mind to ſin both with *Delight* and *Security* too. And were it not for this, it would be impoſſible for any conſidering Man to ſatisfy himſelf in his Continuance in any known Sin for one Moment. For he could not, with any Conſiſtence with that mighty over-ruling Principle of *Self-Preſervation*, commit a Sin, if he aſſuredly knew or believed, that he ſhould be damned for it; which yet, ſince the infinitely juſt and *true God* has moſt peremptorily decreed and threatned, unleſs *Repentance* ſhall intervene,

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it is evident, that his whole Refuge must lie in the *Intervention* of that; which also, he persuades himself, shall, in due Time, step in between him and the *fatal Blow.* And this very Consideration utterly evacuates the terrifying Force of the Divine Threatning; and by promising the Sinner a *fair Issue* of Things, both here and hereafter, makes the poor *self-deluding*, and *deluded Creature* conclude, *that his Sin shall never find him out.*

And thus having shewn some of those *fallacious Grounds*, upon which Men use to build their Confidence of the *Concealment*, or at least of the *Impunity* of their Sins; I proceed now to the

3*d* and *last General Head*, at first proposed by us, *Which was to shew, The Vanity of such a Confidence, by declaring those several Ways, by which, in the Issue, it comes certainly to be defeated*; and that both with reference to *this World*, and the *next.*

And first for this World; there are various Ways, by which it comes to be disappointed here. As

1. The very *Confidence itself of Secrecy*, is a direct and natural Cause of the Sinner's *Discovery.* For Confidence in such Cases causes a frequent *Repetition* of the same

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Action; and if a Man does a Thing frequently, it is odds, but ſome Time or other, he is diſcovered; for by this he ſubjects himſelf to ſo many more Accidents; every one of which may poſſibly betray him. He who has eſcaped in many Battles, has yet been killed in the Iſſue; and by playing too often at the *Mouth* of *Death*, has been *ſnapped* by it at laſt.

Add to this, that *Confidence* makes a Man *venturous*, and Venturouſneſs caſts him into the high Road of *Danger*, and the very Arms of *Deſtruction*. For while a Man ventures, he properly *ſhuts the Eyes* of his Reaſon. And he, who ſhuts his own Eyes, lies ſo much the more open to thoſe of other Men.

2. There is ſometimes a ſtrange, providential Concurrence of *unuſual*, *unlikely Accidents*, for the Diſcovery of great Sins; a Villany committed perhaps *but once in an Age*, comes ſometimes to be found out alſo by ſuch an Accident, as ſcarce happens above *once in an Age*. For there are ſome Sins more immediately invading the great Intereſts of *Society*, *Government*, and *Religion*; which Providence ſets itſelf in a more peculiar Manner to detect, and *bring to Light*, in ſpite of all the Coverings which Art or Power can caſt

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caſt over them: Such as are *Murder*, *Perjury*, and *Sacrilege*, (all of them accounted Sins of the fouleſt Guilt before *Forty One*, but *Marks of Regeneration* with many ever ſince:) And more particularly for Murder; in what a ſtrange, ſtupendous Manner does Providence often-times trace it out; though concealed with all the Cloſeneſs, which *Guilt* and *Skill*, and the *Legerdemain* of a well *packed* and *paid Jury* can ſecure it by?

Such *ſmall*, ſuch *contemptible*, and almoſt *unobſervable* Hints have ſometimes unraveled and thrown open the myſterious Contexture of the deepeſt-laid Villanies, and delivered the *Murderer* into the Hands of *Juſtice*, by Means, which ſeemed almoſt as much *above Nature*, as the Sin committed was *againſt it*.

And the like Inſtances might be given in many other *Crying Sins*, which ſometimes cry ſo *long*, and ſo *loud* too, that they come at length to be *ſeen*, as well as *heard*, and to alarm the Earth, as well as pierce *Heaven*. *Curſe not the King, no not in thy Heart*, (ſays the wiſe Man, in *Eccleſ.* x. 20.) *For a Bird in the Air ſhall carry the Voice, and that which hath Wings ſhall tell the Matter*: Though ſome, I confeſs, are of Opinion, that ſuch as

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have no Wings, are much nimbler and quicker in *carrying and telling theſe Matters*, than *ſuch as have.* But to keep to theſe remarkable Words now before us; if the *Bird upon the Houſe-Top* (as the Text ſeems to intimate) ſhall be able (in ſuch a Caſe as this) to tell what is done or *whiſpered within the Houſe;* and theſe Inhabitants of the Air ſhall have Keys to our Chambers, and our Cloſets, nay, and to our very Hearts too, how can there be ſuch a Thing in the World, as *Secrecy?* (As the Truth is, ſetting aſide all *Tropes* and *Hyperboles*, there is but very little;) and then, if ſuch *Informers* as theſe find out the *Treaſon;* we may be ſure, that the *Treaſon* itſelf will not fail to find out the *Traytor.*

For let a Criminal ſeem never ſo ſafe in his own Thoughts, and in the Thoughts of all about him, yet ſtill he muſt know, that the Juſtice of God has him in *Chace*, and will one Day ſhew, that *it never hunts ſurer*, than when the Politicians of the World think it *upon a cold Scent.* For how many ſtrange, intricate, and perplexed Villanies have been ript up, and ſpread far and near, which the ſubtile Actors of them, both *before*, *and in*, and *after* the Commiſſion, fully believed, could

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could not possibly be discovered? Whereas, on the contrary, it is most certain, that no Man, though never so crafty and sagacious, can propose to himself such great *Unlikelihoods* for the Discovery of any Action, but others, altogether as crafty, have actually failed, and miscarried under the very same, or greater.

And therefore the *Psalmist*, most appositely to our present Purpose, observes, *Psal.* xxxvi. 2. *That the Sinner flatters himself in his own Eyes, till his Iniquity be found out:* That's the Issue; and no wonder, if such a Practice comes to such an End.

For whosoever flatters himself, cheats and betrays himself by false Reasonings; and by not dealing clearly and impartially with himself, but grounding his Presumption of Secrecy upon Arguments represented to him much firmer and stronger, than his own Experience, severely judging, would allow them to be. For, if such an one finds an Accident highly *improbable*, he will presently screw it up, from thence, to *impossible*, and then conclude, that in so vast a Number of *Contingencies*, one of a Million shall never hit his Case. And very probably it may not. But what if it should? Why then, one such

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unlucky Event will fully *pay the Reckoning* for all former Escapes; and one Treason or Felony discovered, will as certainly bring his Neck to the Block or the Halter, as a Thousand; were they all of them crowded together into one and the same Inditement against him.

3. *God sometimes makes one Sin* the Means of discovering *another:* It often falling out with two *Vices*, as with two Thieves or Rogues; of whom it is hard to say, which is worse, and yet one of them may serve well enough to betray and find out the other. How many have by their *Drunkenness* disclosed their *Thefts*, their *Lusts*, and *Murders*, which might have been buried in perpetual Silence, had not the sottish Committers of them buried their *Reason* in their *Cups?* For the *Tongue* is then got loose from its Obedience to *Reason*, and commanded at all Adventures by the Fumes of a distempered Brain, and a roving Imagination; and so presently pours forth whatsoever they shall suggest to it, sometimes casting away *Life*, *Fortune*, *Reputation*, and all in a Breath.

And how does the *confident* Sinner know, but the *Grace of God*, which he has so often affronted and abused, may some Time or other

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other deſert, and give him up to the ſordid Temptations of the *Jug*, and the *Bottle*, which ſhall make the Doors of his Heart *fly open*; and cauſe his own Tongue to give in *Evidence* againſt him, for all the Villanies which had lain ſo long *heaped up*, and concealed in his guilty Breaſt? For let no Man think, that he has the Secrets of his *own Mind* in his *own Power*, while he has not himſelf ſo; as it is moſt certain, that he has not, who is actually under a *Debauch*; for this confounds, and turns all the Faculties of the Soul topſy-turvy; like a Storm toſſing and troubling the Sea, till it makes all the foul, black Stuff, which lay at the Bottom, to ſwim, and roll upon the Top.

In like manner, the *drunken Man's Heart* floats upon his Lips, and his inmoſt *Thoughts* proclaim, and write themſelves upon his *Forehead*; and therefore, as it is an uſual, and indeed a very rational Saying, *That a Lyar ought to have a good Memory*; ſo upon the like Account, *A Perſon of great Guilt, ought to be alſo a Perſon of great Sobriety*; leſt otherwiſe his very *Soul* ſhould, ſome Time or other, chance to be *poured out* with his *Liquor*; for commonly the ſame Hand which *pierces* the Veſſel, *broaches* the Heart

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alſo, and it is no ſtrange, nor unuſual Paſſage from the *Tavern* to the *Goal.*

4. *God ſometimes infatuates*, and ſtrikes the Sinner with *Frenzy*, and ſuch a *Diſtraction*, as cauſes him to reveal all his hidden Baſeneſs; and to *blab* out ſuch *Truths*, as will be ſure to be revenged upon him who ſpeaks them. In a word, God blaſts, and takes away his Underſtanding, for having uſed it ſo much to the Diſhonour of him who gave it; and delivers him over to a ſort of *Madneſs*, too black and criminal to be allowed any Refuge in *Bedlam.* And for this, there have been ſeveral fearful Inſtances of ſuch wretched Contemners of Heaven, as having, for many Years, outfaced all the World, both about them, and above them too, with a ſolemn Look, and a demure Countenance, have, yet at length, had their loathſome *Inſide* turned *outwards*, and been made an abhorred Spectacle to Men and Angels. For it is but juſt with God, when Men have debauched their *Conſciences*, to bereave them of their Senſes alſo; and to diſturb, and diſarm their Reaſon ſo, as to diſable it from ſtanding upon its Guard, even by that laſt and *loweſt Sort of Self-Defence*, the *keeping of its own Counſel*; for no Chains will

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will hold a *mad Man's* Tongue, no Fetters can reſtrain the Ramble of his Diſcourſe, nor *bind* any one *Faculty* of his Soul or Body to its *good Behaviour*: But all that is within him, is promiſcuouſly thrown out; and his *Credit*, with all that is dear to him, is at the Mercy of this *unruly Member*, (as St. *James* calls it) which, in the preſent Caſe, has *no Mercy* upon him, whom it belongs to; nor any Thing to govern it, but a violent, frantick Humour, wholly unable to govern itſelf.

5. *God ſometimes* lets looſe the Sinner's Conſcience upon him, filling it with ſuch Horrour for Sin, as renders it utterly unable to *bear* the Burden it labours under, without publiſhing, or rather proclaiming it to the World.

For ſome Sorts of Sin there are, which will lie *burning* and *boiling* in the Sinner's *Breaſt*, like a kind of *Veſuvius*, or Fire pent up in the *Bowels* of the *Earth*; which yet *muſt*, and *will* (in ſpite of all Obſtacles) force its Way out of it at length; and thus, in ſome Caſes of Sin, the Anguiſh of the Mind grows ſo exceeding *fierce* and *intolerable*, that it finds no Reſt within itſelf, is even ready to *burſt*, till it is delivered

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livered of the *swelling Secret* it labours with: Such kind of Guilt being to the Conscience, like some offensive Meats to the Stomach, which no sooner takes them in, but it is in Pain and Travail, till it throws them out again.

Who knows the Force, the Power, and the remorsless Rage of *Conscience*, when God commissions it to call the Sinner to an Account? How strangely it will *sift and winnow* all his Retirements? How terribly it will wring and torture him, till it has bolted out the *hidden Guilt*, which it was in search of? *All* which is so mighty an Argument of the Prerogative of God over Mens Hearts, that no *Malefactor* can be *accounted free*, though in *his own keeping*, nor any one *concealed*, though never so much out of Sight; for still God has his Serjeant, or Officer in the Sinner's Breast; who will be sure to attack him, as soon as ever the *great Judge* shall but give the Word; an *Officer* so strictly true to his Trust, that he is neither to be *softened*, nor *sweetened*; neither to be *begged*, nor *bought off*; nor consequently, in a word, fit to be of the Jury, when a *rich*, or *potent Malefactor* comes to be tryed, in hopes to be brought off.

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And this alſo ſhews the great *Importance* and *Wiſdom* of that Advice of *Pythagoras*, namely, *That every Man, when he is about to do a wicked Action, ſhould, above all Things in the World, ſtand in awe of himſelf*, and dread the *Witneſs within him:* Who ſits there as a Spy over all his Actions; and will be ſure, one Day or other, to accuſe him *to himſelf*; and perhaps put him upon ſuch a *Rack*, as ſhall make him accuſe himſelf *to others* too.

For this is no new Thing, but an old experimented Caſe; there having been ſeveral in the World, whoſe Conſcience has been ſo much too hard for them, that it has compelled them to diſcloſe a villanous Fact, even with the *Gibbet and the Halter* ſet before their Eyes; and to confeſs their Guilt, though they ſaw *certain* and *immediate Death* the Reward of that *Confeſſion.*

But moſt commonly has *Conſcience* this diſmal Effect upon great Sinners, at their Departure out of this World; at which Time, ſome feel themſelves ſo horribly *ſtung* with the Guilty Senſe of ſome *frightful Sin*, that they cannot die with any tolerable Peace, till they have revealed it; finding it ſome ſmall Relief (it ſeems) and *Eaſement* of their

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their *Load*, to leave the Knowledge of their Sin behind them, *though they carry* the Guilt of it along with them.

6thly and *lastly*. *God sometimes* takes the Work of *Vengeance* upon himself; and immediately, with *his own Arm*, repays the Sinner, by some notable Judgment from Heaven; sometimes, perhaps, he strikes him *dead suddenly*; and sometimes he smites him with some loathsome Disease (which will hardly be *thought* the *Gout*, whatsoever it may be called) and, sometimes again, he strangely blasts him in his Name, Family, or Estate, so that all about him stand amazed at the Blow; but *God*, and the *Sinner* himself know well enough the *Reason*, and the Meaning of it too.

Justice, we know, uses to be pictured *blind*, and therefore it finds out the Sinner, not with its *Eyes*, but with its *Hands*; not by *seeing*, but by *striking*: And it is the Honour of the *great Attribute* of God's *Justice*, which he thinks so much concerned, to give some *Pledge* or Specimen of itself upon bold Sinners in this World; and so to assure them of a *full Payment hereafter*, by paying them something in the Way of *Earnest* here.

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And the Truth is, *many* and *marvellous* have been the Inſtances of God's dealing in this Manner, both with *Cities* and *whole Nations*. For when a Guilt has ſpread itſelf ſo far, as to become *National*, and grown to ſuch a Bulk, as to be too *big* for all Controul of *Law*; ſo that there ſeems to be a *Diſpute*, whether *God* or *Sin* governs the World; ſurely it is then high Time for God to do his own Work with his own Hand, and to aſſert his Prerogative againſt the *impudent Defiers* of it, by ſomething every whit as Signal and National, as the *Provocation* given; whether it be by *War*, *Plague*, or *Fire*, (all which we have been *viſited with*, though neither *corrected*, nor changed by;) and to let the Common Nuſances of the Age, the profeſſed Enemies of *Vertue* and *Religion*, and the very *Blots* and *Scandal* of humane Nature itſelf know, that there ſtill remains upon them a *flaming Guilt* to account for, and a dreadful *Judge* to account to.

And thus I have gone over ſeveral of thoſe Ways, by which a Man's *Sin overtakes and finds him out in this World*. As firſt, the very Confidence itſelf of *Secrecy*, is a direct and natural Cauſe of the Sinner's *Diſcovery*.

Secondly,

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Secondly, There is sometimes a strange, providential Concurrence of unusual, unlikely *Accidents*, for the bringing to light great *Villanies*. Thirdly, God sometimes makes one *great Sin* a Means to detect and lay open *another*. Fourthly, God sometimes infatuates, and strikes the Sinner with *Frenzy*, and such a *Distraction*, as makes him reveal all his hidden *Guilt*. Fifthly, God sometimes *lets loose* the Sinner's *Conscience* upon him, so that he can find no Rest *within himself*, till he has confessed and declared his Sin. Sixthly and lastly, God sometimes *smites* and *confounds* him, by some notable, immediate *Judgment from Heaven*.

These I say, are some of the chief Ways by which God finds out the Sinner in this Life. But what now? if none of all these should reach *his* Case? but that he carries his Crimes all his Life *closely*, and ends that quietly; and perhaps, in the Eye of the World, honourably too; and so has the good Luck to have his *Shame* cast into, and covered under the same Ground with his *Carcass?* Why yet, for all this, the Man has not *escaped*; but his *Guilt* still haunts, and follows him into the other World, where there can be no longer a Concealment

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cealment of it, but it muſt *inevitably find him out.* For as it is in the viith of *Daniel*, *ver.* 10. *When the Judgment ſhall be ſet, the Books ſhall be alſo opened.* Even thoſe *Doomſday Books* (as I may ſo call them) wherein God has kept a complete Regiſter of all the Villanies that were ever committed againſt Him, which then ſhall be diſplayed, and read aloud in the Audience of that great and terrible Court. The *Conſideration* of which, ſurely, may well put thoſe excellent Words of the Apoſtle in *Rom.* vi. 21. with this little Alteration of them, into our Mouths. *What Fruit can we* [now] *have of thoſe Things, whereof we ſhall* [then] *be aſhamed!* So, what Advantage of *Pleaſure, Profit,* or *Honour,* can the Sinner promiſe to himſelf from any Sin, which may be laid in the Balance againſt that infinite and incredible Weight of *Reproach,* with which it will certainly pay him home *at that Day?*

For, could he perſuade *the Mountains to cover him,* or could he hide himſelf in the *Boſom of the great Deep,* or could he wrap himſelf in the very *Darkneſs of Hell,* yet ſtill *his Sin* would fetch him out *of all,* and preſent him naked, open, and defenceleſs before

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before that *fiery Tribunal*, where he must receive the Sentence of everlasting Confusion; and where the Devil himself will be sure *to do him Justice*, as never failing to be a most liberal Rewarder of all his *Pimps* and *Vassals*, for the *secret Service* done him in this World.

And now, what is the whole foregoing Discourse, but a kind of Panegyrick (such a mean one as it is) upon that glorious Thing *Innocence?* I say, Innocence, which makes that Man's Face shine *in Publick*, whose Actions and Behaviour it governs *in Private*. For the innocent Person lives not under the continual Torment of *Doubts and Fears*, lest he should *be discovered*; for the *Light* is his Friend, and to be *seen and looked upon* is his Advantage: The most retired *Parts* of his Life being like *Jewels*; which, though indeed most commonly kept locked up in the *Cabinet*, yet are then most admired and valued, when *shewn*, and *set forth* by the *Brightness* of the *Sun*, as well as by *their own*.

How poor a Thing *Secrecy* is to corrupt a Rational Man's Behaviour, has been sufficiently declared already, by the *Survey*, which we have taken, of those several Ways, whereby

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by *the moſt wiſe and juſt Governor of the World* is pleaſed to defeat, and befool the Confidence of the ſubtileſt, and the *ſlyeſt Sinners.* We have ſeen alſo, what *Paper Walls* ſuch Perſons are apt to incloſe themſelves with; and how *ſlight, thin,* and *tranſparent* all their fineſt Contrivances of Secrecy are; while, notwithſtanding all the private Receſſes, and *dark Cloſets,* which they ſo much truſt in, the *Windows of Heaven* are ſtill open *over their Heads:* And now, what ſhould the Conſideration of all this do, but every *Minute* of our Lives remind us, *ſo* to behave ourſelves, *as* under the Eye of that God, who *ſees in ſecret,* and *will reward us openly?*

To whom be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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The Recompence of the Reward:

A

SERMON

Preached in *Christ-Church, Oxon*, before the University, *Sept.* 11. 1698.

ON

HEBREWS xi. 24, 25, 26.

By Faith Moses, *when he came to Years, refused to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter. Choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season. Esteeming the Reproach of Christ greater Riches, than all the Treasures of* Egypt. *For he had respect unto the Recompence of the Reward.*

THIS Chapter exhibits to us a noble and victorious Army of Saints, together with an Account of those heroick Actions and Exploits, which they were renowned for, in their several Ages; and have been since transmitted such

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ſuch to Poſterity. As, *That they ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Wonders, ſtopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire*; and in a word, *triumphed over the cruelleſt and bittereſt Perſecutions.* And the great Spring or Principle, which (in ſpite of all their Enemies *Power*, and their own *Weakneſs*) bore them up to theſe high Achievements, is not obſcurely intimated in the Perſon of *Moſes* to have been *a Reſpect to the Recompence of Reward.* Thus (as it were) faſtening one Hand upon the *Promiſe*, and turning about the *World* with the other.

A due Conſideration of which *Ground and Motive of* Action in ſo great a Perſon, and ſo authentick an Example of Sanctity, as *Moſes* was, may juſtly make us wonder at that ſtrange *Propoſition*, or rather *Paradox*, which has, for ſo long a Time, paſſed current with too many, namely, *That a Chriſtian, in all Acts of Duty, ought to ſequeſter his Mind from all Reſpect to an enſuing Reward, and to commence his Obedience wholly and entirely upon the Love of Duty itſelf, abſtracted from all Regard to any following Advantages whatſoever.* And that to do otherwiſe, is to act as a *Slave*, and not as a *Son*;

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a Temper of Mind, which will certainly embaſe and diſcommend all our Services to the Acceptance of Almighty God.

This is a glorious Speech, I confeſs, and to the Angels, to the *Cherubims* and *Seraphims* perhaps practicable; whoſe Natures being ſo different from, and ſo much ſuperiour to ours, may (for ought we know) have as different and ſuperiour a Way of Acting too. But then we are to conſider, that even that known, and ſo much celebrated *Aphoriſm*, which this *Aſſertion* is manifeſtly founded upon; to wit, *That Vertue is its own Reward*, will, upon Examination, be found true only in a limited Senſe. That is to ſay, in reſpect of a *Sufficiency of Worth* in it to *deſerve* our Choice, but not in reſpect of a *Sufficiency of Power* actually to *engage* our Choice. For ſuch a Sufficiency it has not; and conſequently, if taken in this Senſe, and applyed to Men in their natural Eſtate, though under any Height or Elevation of Piety whatſoever, it is ſo far from being the true and refined Senſe of the Goſpel, (as ſome pretend) that it is really abſurd in *Reaſon*; and, I ſuppoſe, that, to demonſtrate it not to be *Evangelical*, there needs no other Courſe to be taken, than to prove it to be *Irrational*.

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Irrational. And this, by God's Aſſiſtance, I ſhall endeavour to do in the following Diſcourſe. The Foundations of which, I ſhall lay in theſe four previous Propoſitions.

Firſt, That the Goſpel, or Doctrine of Chriſtianity does not *change*, and much leſs *deſtroy*, or *ſuperſede* the natural Way of the Soul's Acting.

Secondly, That it is natural for the Soul, in the Way of *Inclination* and *Appetite*, to be moved only by ſuch Objects, as are in themſelves *deſirable*.

Thirdly, That as it is natural for the Soul to be thus moved, only by Things *deſirable*, ſo it is equally natural to it to be moved by them only in that *Degree and Proportion*, in which they are *deſirable*: And conſequently, in the

Fourth and *laſt place*, That whatſoever is propoſed as a Motive or Inducement to any Action, ought for that Reaſon to be in an higher Degree *deſirable*, and to have in it a greater Fitneſs to *move* and *affect the Will*, than the Action itſelf, which it is propoſed as *a Motive* to.

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For, otherwiſe, it would be ſuperfluous; and indeed, no additional Motive to it at all; foraſmuch as the *bare Action* ſo conſidered would be as ſtrong an Argument to a Man to perform it, as *ſuch a Motive* (being but in the ſame Degree *deſirable*) could be to *induce him* to it.

Now theſe four Propoſitions fully weighed, and put together, will amount to a clear Proof of that which I firſt intended to prove. For *to be moved by Rewards* belongs not to a Man, properly as *corrupt or depraved* in his Nature through *the Fall*, but ſimply as *he is a Man*; a Creature endued with the Faculties of *Underſtanding* and *Will*: And therefore, ſince the Goſpel (as we have ſhewn) entrenches not upon the natural Way of the Soul's *Working*, it follows, That neither under the Goſpel can it be unlawful *to engage in Duty from a Reſpect to a future Recompence*. And moreover, ſince it is natural to the Will to be *more moved* by that, which is in itſelf *more deſirable*; And ſince that, which is given as a Motive to any *Action*, ought to be in itſelf more deſirable than *that Action*; And laſtly, ſince God propoſes *Rewards*, as ſuch *Motives* to the *Actions* of *Duty* and *Obedience*, it roundly follows, that it

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it is not only lawful, in the Matter of Obedience, *to have respect to the Recompence of Reward*, but also, that according to the *natural Order* of humane Acting, the Soul should have *respect* to that in the first place; and then, being animated and enlivened thereby, should *respect* the Works of Duty and Obedience in the next.

But to bring Things into a narrower Compass, and so both to prosecute the Subject more fully, and to represent it more clearly; I shall reduce what I have to say upon it, into these two Propositions.

1*st*, That in the Actions *of Duty* considered barely *as Duty*, or *as Morally Good*, and *fit to be done*, there is not a sufficient Motive to engage the Will of Man in a constant Practice of them.

2*dly*, That the Proposal of a *Reward* on God's Part, and a *Respect* had to it on Man's, are certainly necessary to engage Men in such a Course of Duty and Obedience.

This Proposition naturally and unavoidably issues from the former; and accordingly, we shall consider both of them in their Order.

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1. And first for the first of them, to wit, *That Duty considered barely as Duty, does not carry in it a sufficient Motive to engage the Will of Man in the constant Practice of it.* And this I shall endeavour to make out by these following Reasons: As 1*st*, If in the Soul of Man its *Averseness to Duty* be much greater and stronger than its *Inclination* to it, then *Duty* considered barely in itself, is not sufficient to determine the *Will of Man* to the constant Performance of it; which in my Judgment, is an Argument so *forcible* and *clear*, that one of greater *Force* and *Clearness* cannot well be desired. For unless *Hatred* must pass for *Courtship*, and *Hostility* for *Allurement*, certainly that, from *which the Will is so averse*, cannot be a proper Means to win upon it, or to get into its Embraces. No; sooner may the *Fire* be attracted by the Center of the *Earth*; or the *Vine* clasp about the *Bramble*; than any Faculty of the Soul have its Inclinations drawn forth by a contrary and distasteful Object.

And then, for the Ground of this Argument, to wit, *That the Soul has originally such an Averseness to Duty*; this, I suppose, is but too evident to need any further Pro-

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bation. For that horrid Proneneſs of Man's Will to all Vice, that Inundation of Leudneſs, which with ſuch an unreſiſted Facility, or rather ſuch an uncontrouled Predominance has ſpread itſelf over the whole World, is a ſad, but full Eviction of this fatal Truth. For what mean all thoſe hard Reſtraints and Shackles put upon us in our Minority? What are thoſe ſeveral Arts of Diſcipline and Education, thoſe early Preventions, but ſo many Banks (as it were) raiſed up to keep that Sea of Impurity, that ſwells within our Nature, from pouring itſelf forth into actual Enormities upon every Occaſion? How hardly is the reſtive, unruly Will of Man firſt *tamed* and *broke* to Duty? How exceeding hardly are its native Reluctancies *maſtered*, and ſubdued to the ſober Rules of Morality? Duty carries with it a *grim*, and a *ſevere Aſpect*; and the very Nature of it involves *Difficulty*. And *Difficulty*, certainly, is no very apt Thing to ingratiate or endear itſelf to Mens Practices or Affections. Nay, ſo undeniable is the Truth of this, that the very Scene of Vertue is laid in our natural Averſeneſs to Things Excellent and Praiſe-Worthy. For *Vertue* is properly a *Force upon Appetite, the Conqueſt of an Inclination, and the* powerful

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ful *Bending of the Mind* to unusual Choices, and preter-natural Courses; so that, indeed, to live vertuously, is to swim against the Stream; to be above the Pleasures of Sense, and in a word, to be good in spite of *Inclination.*

And upon this Account alone it is, that Vertue carries so high a Price in the World, and that it attracts such a mighty Esteem and Value, both to itself, and to him who has it, and that even from those who have it not. For, if to lie a Bed, to fare deliciously, and to flow with all Sorts of Delight and Plenty, were *to be vertuous*, there could be no more Commendation due to a vertuous Person, than to one who had pleased his Palate, fed lustily, and slept well. But nothing *easy* ever did or will draw after it either *Applause* or *Admiration.* No, these are Things, which wait only upon the Painful, the Active, and Laborious; upon those, who both *do* and *undergo* such Things, as the rest of Mankind are unwilling and afraid to meddle with; and that gives them *Fame* and *Renown*, and *Lustre* in the Eyes of the World round about them; for to reconcile *Ease* and *Splendor* together is impossible; and not only the *Course of Providence*, but the very *Nature of Things* protests

proteſts againſt it. And therefore, the Paths of Vertue muſt needs lie through craggy Rocks and Precipices; its very *Food* is *Abſtinence*; it is cheriſhed with *Induſtry* and *Self-Denial*; it is exerciſed, and kept in Heart, with *arduous* Attempts, and *hard Services*; and if it were otherwiſe, it could neither be *High*, nor *Great*, nor *Honourable*, nor indeed ſo much as *Vertue*.

But now, if this be the *natural* Complexion of *Vertue* and *Duty*, by ſuch terrifying Severities to raiſe in the Soul a Kind of Horror of it, and Averſion to it, let this be the *firſt Reaſon*, why Duty conſidered barely in itſelf, and abſtracted from all *Reward*, is not ſufficient to engage Men *in the Practice of it*. Next to which,

2. The ſecond Reaſon, for the Proof of the ſame Truth, is this, That thoſe *Affections* and *Appetites* of the Soul, which have the ſtrongeſt Influence upon it, to encline and byaſs it in all its Choices, to wit, *the Appetites* belonging properly *to the ſenſitive Part of Man's Nature*, are not at all moved, or gratified by any Thing in Duty, conſidered barely as *Duty*, and therefore, as ſo conſidered, it is not a ſufficient *Motive* to induce Men to the Practice of it. Now this Reaſon alſo,

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alſo, I conceive, carries its *own Evidence* with it. For the Soul of Man (as the preſent State of Nature is) generally *moves*, as thoſe forementioned *Appetites* and *Affections* ſhall *incline* it; and therefore, if that which thus *inclines* it, be not, ſome Way or other, firſt made ſure of, all Perſuaſions addreſſed immediately to the Will itſelf, are like to find but a very cold Reception.

I ſhall not here inſiſt upon the Diviſion of the Appetites of the Soul into the *Rational* and *Senſitive*, the *Superiour* and *Inferiour*, and much leſs ſhall I trace them into any further Sub-Diviſions: But ſhall only obſerve, that there is one general, comprehenſive *Appetite*, or rather *Ratio Appetendi*, common to all the particular Appetites, and into which the ſeveral Operations of each of them are reſolved; and that is, the great Appetite of *Jucundum*, or Tendency of the whole Soul to *that which pleaſes*. For whether they be properly the Deſires of the *Rational Part*, or the Deſires and Inclinations of the *Senſitive*, they all concurr, and meet in this, that they tend to, and terminate in ſomething, that may pleaſe and delight them.

But now I have already ſhewn, that *bare Duty* and *Vertue* are rather attended with Difficulty

Difficulty and *Hardſhip*, than ſeaſoned, and ſet off with Pleaſure; and, for that Cauſe, are commonly looked upon but as *dry Things*; and conſequently ſuch, as need to have ſomething of *Reliſh* put into them, by the Aſſignation of a *pleaſing Reward*; which may ſo recommend, and gild the *bitter Pill*, as to reconcile it to this great Appetite, and thereby convey, and ſlide it into *the Will*, as a proper Object of its Choice.

Nay, and I ſhall proceed further, and add, That *Duty*, upon theſe Grounds, is then moſt effectually propoſed, when it is not only ſeconded *with a Reward*, but alſo with a *Reward ſenſibly repreſented*; and (ſo far, as the Nature of the Thing will bear) with all the Conditions of *Allurement* and *Delight*; that ſo, it may be able to counterbalance the contrary Suggeſtions of Senſe, which beat ſo ſtrongly upon the Imagination. Upon which Account, as *Moſes* enforced the Obſervation of *his Law* upon the *Iſraelites*, by *Rewards* moſt ſuitable, and adapted to Senſe; as conſiſting of *temporal Promiſes*; (though couching under them (I confeſs) ſpiritual, and more ſublime Things;) ſo *Chriſt* himſelf, though the *Rewards* promiſed by him to his Followers were all of them heavenly and *ſpiritual*,

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ſpiritual, yet he vouchſafed oftentimes to expreſs them, by ſuch Objects, as moſt affected the *Senſe*. As for Inſtance. The *Enjoyments of the other World* are ſhadowed, and ſet forth to us in the Goſpel, by *drinking Wine in the Kingdom of Heaven*, Luk. xxii. 18. And by *the Mirth and Feſtivities of a Marriage Feaſt*, Matth. xxii. 4. Alſo by *ſitting upon Thrones*, Matth. xix. 28. Likewiſe by *dwelling in Palaces adorned with Pearls and Diamonds, and all Kind of precious Stones*, *Rev.* xxi. 19, 20, 21. And laſtly, *by the continual Singing of triumphal Songs*, Rev. xv. 3. and xix. 1. All which are ſome of the moſt lively and exalted Inſtances of *Pleaſure*, that fall within the Enjoyment of *Senſe* in this World. And this Way of Expreſſion was moſt wiſely made uſe of by our Saviour, for that the Pleaſures of the *ſenſitive*, *inferiour Appetites*, though they are not in themſelves the *beſt Objects*, yet are certainly the beſt Repreſentations and Conveyances of *ſuch Objects* to the Mind; ſince without ſome Kind of ſenſible Dreſs, Things *too fine* for Mens *Apprehenſions*, can never much work upon their *Affections*.

And upon the ſame Ground, we may obſerve alſo, That thoſe Vertues are the moſt generally

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generally and easily practised, which do least thwart, and oppose these Appetites. As for Example, *Veracity* in speaking *Truth*; *Faithfulness* in not violating a Trust; and *Justice* in punishing Offenders, or *rendring to every one his Due*, are much more frequent in the World, than *Temperance*, *Sobriety*, and *Chastity*, and other such Vertues, as are properly Conversant about abridging the Pleasures of the Senses.

So then, if this be the Case, That the Soul of Man, in all its Choices, is naturally apt to be determined by *Pleasure*, and the *sensitive*, *inferiour Appetites* (which would draw it off from Duty) are continually plying it with such suitable and taking Pleasures; doubtless, there is no Way for Duty to prevail, and get Ground of them, but by *bidding higher*, and offering the Soul *greater Gratifications* wrapped up in an eternal Reward. For *when* an Adversary is ready to *bribe* the Judge, and the Judge is as ready to be bribed; assuredly, there is no Way so likely to carry the Cause, as to out-bribe him. The sensitive *Part* or *Principle* in all the pressing, enticing Offers it makes to the Soul, must either be *gained and taken off from alluring*, or be *conquered and out-done* in

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in it. The former of which can never be effected; but the latter *may*, and that by no other Means, than by repreſenting Duty as cloathed with ſuch great and taking Rewards, that the Soul ſhall ſtand convinced, that there will be really a greater, and more ſatisfactory *Pleaſure in the Conſequents of Duty*, (how hard ſoever it may appear at preſent) than there can be in the freeſt, and moſt unlimited Fruition of the greateſt, ſenſual Delights.

But now, ſhould we proceed upon the contrary Principle, requiring Obedience without Recompence, How *lame* and ſucceſsleſs would every Precept of the Divine *Law* prove, when thus propoſed *to us naked* and ſtripped of all that may either ſtrengthen or recommend it? Would not ſuch a forelorn *Nakedneſs* repreſent it, as coming rather *to beg*, than *to command?* And to ask an *Alms*, than to impoſe *a Duty?* For ſuppoſe, that when God bids us *faſt* and *pray*; *abſtain from* all the Allurements of ſenſual *Pleaſure*; *deny ourſelves*; being *ſmote upon one Cheek*, *turn the other*; and laſtly, *chuſe Death*, *rather than commit the leaſt known Sin*. Suppoſe, I ſay, that God ſhould command us all theſe ſevere Things, upon no other Account, but be-

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cauſe they are excellent Actions, high Strains of Vertue, moſt pleaſing to God, and upon that ſcore both commanded by him, and to be performed by us. Certainly theſe Conſiderations (notwithſtanding all the Reaſon and Truth that is in them) would yet ſtrike the Will but very faintly: For Men care not for *ſuffering*, while they think it is only for *Sufferings-ſake*. And *Self-Denial* is but a *ſour Morſel*, and will hardly go down without ſomething to *ſweeten* it; and Men, generally, have but a *ſmall Appetite to pray*, and a much ſmaller to *faſt*, (how great ſoever they may have after it.) On the contrary therefore, let us, in this Caſe, take our Meaſures from the Addreſſes made by our Saviour himſelf to the Minds of Men; *Bleſſed* (ſays he to his Diſciples) *are ye, when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſpeak all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad.* But why I pray? Was it ſuch Matter of Joy, either to *be ſpit*, or *trampled* upon? To be aſperſed by Mens *Tongues*, or cruſhed under *their Heels?* No certainly, but we have a very good Reaſon given us for all this, in the next Words: *For great* (ſays our Saviour) *is your Reward in Heaven*, Matth. v. 12. And

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again, *Bleſſed are thoſe that mourn.* But ſurely not for the bare *Flendi Voluptas*; nor for any ſuch great Deſirableneſs, that there is or can be in *Tears* or *Groans*, any more than in that which cauſes them. No, but for ſomething elſe, that was abundantly able to make amends for all theſe *Sadneſſes*, in the 5th and 6th *Verſes* of the ſame Chapter. *For ſuch* (ſays our Saviour) *ſhall be comforted*: Which one Word implies in it all the Felicity and Satisfaction that humane Nature is capable of. But now had our Saviour, in Defiance of all their *natural Inclinations*, preſſed theſe Auſterities upon them, as the ſole and ſufficient *Reaſon* and *Reward of themſelves*, ſurely he had done like one, who neither underſtood the Nature of Man's Will, nor the true *Arts of Perſuaſion*. And the Caſe had been much the ſame, as if *Moſes*, inſtead of giving the *Iſraelites Water*, had bid them quench their *Thirſt with the Rock*. Let this therefore be the ſecond Reaſon, *Why Duty conſidered barely as Duty, and abſtracted from all Reward, is not ſufficient to induce Men to the* Practice of it.

3. The *third and laſt Reaſon*, that I ſhall alledge for the ſame, is this: *That if Duty*, conſidered barely in itſelf, ought to be the

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ſole Motive to Duty, without *any Reſpect to a ſubſequent Reward*, then thoſe two Grand Affections of *Hope and Fear* ought to have no Influence upon Men, ſo as to move or engage them to the Acts of Duty at all. The Conſequence is moſt clear; becauſe the proper Objects, upon which theſe Affections are to be employed, are *future Rewards*, and *future Puniſhments*; and therefore, if no *Regard* ought to be had of theſe in Matters of Duty; it will follow, that neither muſt thoſe Affections, which are wholly converſant about *Rewards*, have any thing to do about *Duty*, wherein no Conſiderations of a *Reward* ought, upon this Principle, to take place. This, I ſay, would be the genuine, unavoidable Conſequence of this Doctrine.

But now, ſhould any one venture to own ſuch an odd and abſurd Paradox, in any of thoſe ſober, rational Parts of *Chriſtendom*, which have not depraved their *judging* and *diſcerning* Faculties with thoſe *ſtrange*, *new-found*, *extatick* Notions of Religion, which ſome (who call themſelves Chriſtians, and *Chriſtians of the higheſt Form too*) have, in the late *ſuper-reforming* Age, taken up amongſt us; how unnatural, or rather in-

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deed; how romantick would ſuch Divinity appear! For all the World acknowledges, that *Hope* and *Fear* are the two great Handles, by which the Will of Man is to be taken Hold of, when we would either draw it *to Duty*, or draw it off *from Sin*. They are the ſtrongeſt, and moſt efficacious Means to bring ſuch Things home to the Will, as are principally apt to move and work upon it. And the greateſt, the nobleſt, and moſt renowned Actions, that were ever achieved upon the Face of the Earth, have firſt moved upon the Spring of a projecting Hope, carrying the Mind above all preſent Diſcouragements, by the Proſpect of ſome glorious and future Good.

And therefore he, who, to bring Men to do their Duty heartily, and vigorouſly, and to the beſt Advantages of Chriſtianity, ſhall cut off *all Rewards* from it, and ſo remove the proper Materials which *Hope* ſhould exert itſelf upon, does juſt as if a Man ſhould direct another to ſhoot *right* and *true*, by forbidding him to take Aim at the *Mark*; or, as if we ſhould bring a Man to a *Race*, and firſt tie his *Legs* faſt, or cut them off, and then clap him on the Back, and bid him *run*. He who takes away the *Incitements* to Duty,

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Duty, dashes the *Performance* of Duty, and not the Performance only, but the very Attempt also; for Men do not use to *run, only that they may run*, but that *they may obtain*; *Labour* itself being certainly one of the worst Rewards of a Man's *Pains*. And therefore, no wonder, if every *Exhortation* to Vertue has just so much Strength in it, as there is in the *Argument* brought to enforce it. For, if we will be but true to the first Principles of *Nature*, we shall find, that all Arguments made use of to persuade the *Mind* of Man, must be founded upon something, that is *grateful, acceptable*, and *pleasing to Nature*; and that, in short, is a Man's easy and comfortable Enjoyment of himself, in all the *Powers, Faculties, and Affections*, both of *his Soul and Body*. Which said *Enjoyment* in the hard and dry Strokes of *Duty and Spiritual Day-Labour*, (as I may call it) I am sure is not to be found. For no Man *enjoys* himself, while he is *spending his Spirits*, and employing the utmost Intention of his Mind upon such Objects, as shall both put and keep it upon the *Stretch*; which yet, in the Performance of Duty, every one actually does, or, at least, should do. In a word, *Irksomeness* in the whole Course of an Action,

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and *Wearineſs* after it, certainly are not *Fruition*; but the Actions of *bare Duty* are naturally accompanyed with both.

Let us, therefore, here once again obſerve the Courſe taken by our Saviour himſelf, when he would raiſe Men up to ſomething ſingular and extraordinary, and above the common Pitch of Duty: As in *Mar.* x. 21. we find, how he anſwered the *rich young Heir*, enquiring of him the Way to Heaven. *Go* (ſays he) *and ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give it all to the Poor.* Now certainly, had our Saviour ſtopped here, this had been as grinding, and as ſtripping a Command, as could have well paſſed upon a Man; and might indeed have ſeemed, not ſo much a Command to *prove*, as an Artifice to *blow him up*; not ſo much a *Teſt*, to try his Obedience, as a *Trick* (like *ſome Oaths*) to worm him out of his Eſtate. But ſurely, our Saviour never affected to be *King of Beggars*, and much leſs *to make Men Beggars*, the better *to King it over them.* Nor can we imagine, that he who was all *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, would have ſo far contradicted both, as to make it a *Duty to give Alms*, and at the ſame Time put Men into a Condition fit only to *receive them*, or that he would have

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have enjoined so great a *Paradox in Practice*, as to require his Followers to chuse *Poverty* meerly for *Poverty*'s Sake; or to sell their *Possessions*, only to buy *Hunger* and *Rags*, *Scorn* and *Contempt* with the Price of them. No; assuredly, the *God of Nature* would never have put a Man upon any Thing so contrary to the first Principles of *Nature*. And therefore, our Saviour did not require this young Man here absolutely to *quit his Riches*, but only to *exchange* them, and to part with a less Estate in *Possession*, for a greater in *Reversion*, with a small *Enjoyment* for a vast *Hope*; in those following Words: *Do this*, (says he) *and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven*: So that he proposed the *Duty* in one Word, and the *Reward* in another. And it was this alone, which made our Saviour's *Proposal* (which looked so terribly at first) fair and rational; and which, without such a *Reward* annexed to it, would, upon the strictest, and most impartial Discourses of *Reason* and *Nature*, have been thrown back as cruel and intolerable.

And again, when our Saviour preached to the World the grand Evangelical Duty of *Taking up the Cross*; we do not find, that he made the meer Burden of *Bearing* it, any

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Argument *for the Taking it up*; no, certainly such Arguments might have pressed hard upon their *Shoulders*, but very little upon their *Reason*. And therefore, in *Mar.* x. 29, 30. *There is no Man*, (says he) *who hath left House, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Sake, and the Gospel; but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this Time, and in the World to come eternal Life.* So that we see here the *Antecedent* smoothed over, and recommended by the *Consequent*. *Duty* and *Reward* walking Hand in Hand; the *Riches* of the *Promise* still over-matching the *Rigours of the Precept*, and (as we observe in the Royal Diadems of Christian Kings) the *Cross* and the *Crown* put together.

But above all, the Example of the great *Author and Finisher of our Faith himself* will put the Point here before us past all Dispute. For are not *his enduring the Cross, and despising the Shame*, (and this latter as terrible a *Crucifixion* to the *Mind*, as the other could be to the *Body*) both of them resolved *into the Joy that was set before him*, Hebr. xii. 2.? And did not our Saviour teach us by his *Example*, as well as by his *Precept*? At least so far,

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far, that what he did, was certainly lawful to be done; though, by reaſon of the immenſe Diſparity of his Condition and ours, not always neceſſary for us to do. But however, as to the Caſe now ſpoken of, it was manifeſtly the ſubſequent Joy which baffled and diſarmed the *preſent Pain*, and the Proſpect of a glorious Immortality, which carried him triumphant through all thoſe Agonies, which bare Mortality muſt otherwiſe have ſunk under.

It has been obſerved, and that with great Wit and Reaſon, That in all Encounters of dangerous and dreadful Iſſue, *it is ſtill the Eye which is firſt overcome*; and being ſo, preſently ſpreads a Terror throughout the whole Man; accordingly, on the contrary, where the Eye is emboldened with the encouraging View of ſome vaſt Enjoyment preſſing cloſe upon the Heels of a preſent Suffering, it diffuſes ſuch a noble Bravery and Courage into all the Faculties, both of Soul and Body, as makes them over-look all Dangers, and by over-looking, conquer and get above them. In a word, let us ſo eye the *great Captain of our Salvation*, as to reſt aſſured of this, that, whereſoever he *went before*, it is both our Privilege, and our Safety

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Safety *to follow*; and that his Example alone is enough, both to *juſtify*, and to *glorify* the Imitation.

But to proceed; as we have ſhewn, how our Saviour has ſometimes thought fit to *draw Men* to their Duty by *their Hopes*, ſo let us ſee in the next place, how he, ſometimes alſo, *drives them* to it by their *Fears*. *Fear not thoſe* (ſays he) *who can but kill the Body, but fear him who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell*, Matth. x. 28. And again, in *Luk.* xii. 5. he enforces the ſame Words with this emphatical Repetition: *Yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* But now, if the *Fear of Hell* influencing a Man either to the Practice of Duty, or the Avoidance of Sin, were the direct *Way to Hell* (as ſome with equal *Confidence* and *Ignorance* have affirmed) ſurely, our Saviour took the moſt prepoſterous Courſe that could be, to preſcribe *the Fear of Hell*, as the ſureſt Means to eſcape it. For how can there be any ſuch Thing *as fleeing from the Wrath to come*, if *Fear*, which is the only Thing that can make Men *flee*, ſhall betray them into that which they *flee from?*

But further, to deſcend from the Method uſed by Chriſt himſelf to that made uſe of

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by his Apoſtles. What means St. *Peter*, to put Men upon *paſſing the Time of their Sojourning here in Fear*, 1 *Pet.* i. 17.? And St. *Paul*, to preſs Men upon *working out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, *Phil.* ii. 12.? For *Fear and Trembling* are certainly very ſenſleſs Things, where a Man is not at all the better for them. But theſe experienced Guides (it ſeems) very well knew how impoſſible it was, where the Concern was infinite and unſpeakable, and the Danger equal, for any Man of Senſe and Reaſon to ſhake off *his Fears*, and retain *his Wits* too. And therefore, to me it ſeems none of the ſmalleſt Arguments againſt the Modern Whimſy, which we are now oppoſing, that both in the Language *of the Old Teſtament and the New*, the whole Buſineſs of Religion is ſtill comprehended and ſummed up in this one great Thing, *the Fear of God.* For this we may aſſure ourſelves of, that he who fears as he ſhould do in this World, ſhall have nothing either to *fear* or *feel* in the next.

And now laſtly, to ſet off the foregoing Authorities with the manifeſt *Reaſon of the Thing itſelf.* It is, doubtleſs, one of the greateſt Abſurdities, that can well fall within the

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the Thoughts of Man, to imagine, that God, who has caſt the Buſineſs of Man's Salvation into ſo large a Compaſs, as to ſhare out to every other Faculty and Affection of the Soul its due Part and Proportion in this great Work, ſhould yet wholly diſintereſt thoſe two noble leading Affections of *Hope and Fear*, from having any Thing to do in the ſame. For muſt theſe only lie idle and fallow, while all the other Affections of the Mind are employed, and taken up? And has God ſomething for *us to love*, and ſomething *to hate*, but in the whole Buſineſs of *Religion*, nothing for us *to hope for*, and nothing *to fear?* Which ſurely he has not, if it be abſolutely unlawful for Men *under the Goſpel*, in any religious Performance, to act with an Eye to *a future Recompence.* And therefore, ſince this Aſſertion, to wit, *That Duty, conſidered barely as Duty, ought to be the ſole Motive to the Practice of it*, brings us under a Neceſſity of aſſerting alſo, *That Hope and Fear ought not at all to influence Men in the Matter of Duty*; which yet is moſt abſurd; and ſince nothing that is *abſurd or falſe*, can, by genuine and juſt Conſequence, iſſue from what *is true*, it follows, that the former Aſſertion, or Poſition from which

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which this latter is inferred, is moſt falſe and irrational. Which was the Thing to be proved. And ſo

I proceed to anſwer ſuch *Objections*, as may with any Colour of Argument be alledged in Oppoſition to the Doctrine hitherto laid down, and defended by us, and ſo conclude this firſt Propoſition. As

1. It may be argued, that there is a certain *Complacency* and *Serenity of Mind* attending the Performance of Actions pious and vertuous, and a Kind of *Horror* or *Remorſe* that follows the Neglect of them, or the Doing of the quite contrary; the Conſideration of which alone, ſetting aſide all further *Hopes* of *a future Reward*, may be a ſufficient Argument to enforce the Practice of *Duty* upon any ſober, rational Mind whatſoever.

To this I anſwer, That this *Complacency* of Mind upon a Man's *doing* his Duty on the one ſide, and that *Remorſe* attending his *Neglect of it*, or doing the quite contrary on the other, are ſo far from excluding *a Reſpect to a future Recompence*, or being a different Motive from it, that they do really *imply* it, and are principally founded in it. The *ſaid Complacency* flowing naturally from the

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the *Assurance* given a Man by his Conscience, that the *Honesty* and *Goodness* of his Actions sets him *free* and *safe* from all that Evil and Punishment, which the *Law of God* awards to the Transgressors of it. And the contrary *Remorse* of Mind proceeding chiefly from a *Dread* of those Punishments, which a Man's Conscience assures him, that the *Breach* of the said Law will render the *Breakers* of it obnoxious to. And that this is so, is demonstrable by this one Reason; that several Men are differently affected, either with this *Complacency*, or *Remorse of Mind*, upon their doing the very same Action; and that because *some* are verily persuaded, that the said Action is *a Sin*, and so to be followed with the Penal Consequents of *Sin*; and *others*, on the contrary, are as fully persuaded, that it is *no Sin*. For the better Illustration, and Proof of which, we must observe, that Mens Judgments *concerning Sin*, have been, and, in several Parts of the World, still are very different; so that what is *Sin* with one People or Nation, is not always so with another: As for instance, some account *Drunkenness* no Sin, as many of the *Germans*; and others have had the same Thoughts of *Theft*, as the *Spartans*; and

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of *Fornication*, as moſt of the *Heathens*; and ſome again think, that an *Officious Lye* is no Sin, as the *Jeſuites* and *Socinians:* Whereas others, on the contrary, ſtand as fully perſuaded, that all theſe are *Sins*, (as indeed they are, and moſt of them very groſs Ones too) and ſuch, as unrepented of, will aſſuredly conſign over the Perſons guilty of them to eternal Puniſhment, from the Hands of a ſin-revenging Juſtice.

But now, upon theſe two ſo different, preconceived Opinions, it will, and muſt certainly follow, that thoſe of the latter Judgment cannot but feel that Horror and Remorſe of Mind upon the doing of theſe Actions, which thoſe of the contrary Perſuaſion, to wit, *That they are no Sins*, undoubtedly, upon the very ſame Actions, do not feel. But now, from whence can this be? Surely, not from the *bare Action* itſelf, nor from any Thing naturally adherent to it; foraſmuch as the *Action*, with all that is natural to it, is the ſame in both thoſe Sorts of Men, whoſe Minds, after the doing of it, are ſo differently affected. And therefore, it muſt needs be from the *different* Infuſions into, and Prepoſſeſſions of Men in their Minority, and firſt Education; by which

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which ſome have been taught, that a ſevere *Puniſhment*, and After-Reckoning belongs to ſuch and ſuch Actions; and by which others again have been taught, that they are Actions in themſelves indifferent, and to which no Penalty at all is due.

I conclude therefore, that the *Complacency*, which Men find, upon the Performance of their Duty, and the *Remorſe* which they feel upon the Neglect of it, taken abſtractedly from all Conſideration of a *future Reward*, cannot be a *ſufficient Motive to Duty*; becauſe, indeed ſo taken, they are but a meer Fiction or Chimera. For that all ſuch *Complacency and Remorſe* are founded only upon an early Perſuaſion wrought into Mens Minds of a *following Retribution of Happineſs or Miſery* allotted to Men hereafter, according to the different Nature and Quality of their Actions here: And ſo much in Anſwer to this firſt Exception. But

2. Some again object and argue, that there is a *different Spirit* required under the Goſpel, from that which was either *under* or *before* the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation; and therefore, though it might be *lawful* and allowable enough for the Church in thoſe Days, living under an *inferiour OEconomy* in all

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all Acts of Duty *to have respect to the Recompence of Reward*, yet in Times of higher, and more spiritual Attainments, and under a *Gospel-State*, Men ought wholly to act, and to be acted by such a *filial* and *free Spirit*, as never to enter upon any Duty with the least Regard to an *After-Compensation*; this being *servile*, *legal*, and *mercenary*; as these *Sons of Perfection* do pretend.

But to this also I answer, That the *Jewish Church*, and the *Church before it*, may be considered under a double Character or Capacity. 1*st*, As they sustained the peculiar *Formality* of a Church so or so constituted. And 2*dly*, As they were Men, or Rational Creatures, as the rest of Mankind *are*.

Now it must be confessed, that what belonged to them in the former *Capacity* was undoubtedly proper and peculiar to them, and so neither does, nor ought to conclude the Church now-a-days, being cast into a *different Form* or *Constitution*. Nevertheless, what belonged to them, *simply as they were Men*, or Moral Agents, equally belongs to, and concerns the Church in all Places, and all Ages of the World, and under all *Forms*, *Models*, and *Administrations* whatsoever.

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But now, for any one in the Works of Duty, to proceed upon *Hopes of a Reward, is* (as I have already ſhown) the Reſult of a *Rational Nature*, endued with ſuch Faculties of Mind, as, according to their *natural Way of Acting*, (eſpecially as the State of *Nature* now is) will hardly, or *never* be brought to apply heartily to *Duty*, but in the Strength of ſuch *Motives*; the very Nature of Man inclining him *chiefly*, if not *ſolely* to act upon ſuch Terms and Conditions; ſo that to *do one's Duty with regard to a following Recompence*, concerns not Men under any *peculiar Denomination* of *Jews* or *Chriſtians*, but ſimply as they are *Men*. And to affirm the contrary, is a direct paſſing over to the Hereſy and Dotage of the *Sadducees*, who by miſtaking, and perverting that Saying of *Zadock*, the Author of their Sect and Name, to wit, (*That Men ought to do vertuouſly without any Thought of a following Recompence*) carried it to that Height of Irreligion, as to deny all *Rewards* of *Happineſs* or *Miſery* in another World; and conſequently, a *Reſurrection* to another Life after this. Such horrid and prophane Inferences were drawn, or rather dragged by theſe Hereticks from one unwary and miſunderſtood *Expreſſion*. Never-

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Nevertheleſs, ſo much is, and muſt be granted, (and no doubt, *Zadock* himſelf (if there was ſuch an one) never intended more) That for a Man, in the Practice of Duty, to act *ſolely* and *entirely* from a Deſire *of a following Recompence excluſively* to all *Love* of the *Work* and *Duty* itſelf, is indeed ſervile and mercenary, and no ways ſuitable to that *filial Temper*, which ought to govern all Chriſtian Minds. But then again, we muſt remember, that to *do one's Duty only for a Reward, and not to be willing to do it without one*, are very different Things. And if we conſider even *Judas* himſelf, it was not his *carrying the Bag*, while he followed his Maſter, but his following his Maſter, only that he *might carry the Bag*, which made him a *Thief and an Hireling*. For otherwiſe, I cannot ſee, why he might not have been every whit as lawfully his Maſter's *Almoner*, as he was one of his *Apoſtles*; and have *carried his Bag* with the ſame Duty, with which he might have *carried his Croſs*.

But now, if we ſhall drive the Matter ſo far, as to make it *abſolutely Unchriſtian* for a Man, in the Practice of Duty, to have any Deſign at all upon a *Future Reward*; why

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then (as I may ſpeak with Reverence) does not God, in the Converſion of a Sinner, new-model his very Eſſence, caſheer and lop off the natural Affections of Hope and Fear? And why does he alſo promiſe us *Heaven* and *Glory*, if it be not lawful for us to *purſue* what he is pleaſed to *promiſe?* For are theſe Promiſes made to quicken our *Endeavours*, or to debaſe and ſpoil our *Performances?* To be *Helps*, or rather *Snares* to our Obedience? All which, if it be both abſurd and impious for any one to imagine, then it will follow, that this, and the like *Exceptions*, from which ſuch Paradoxes are inferred, muſt needs alſo fall to the Ground as falſe, and not to be defended.

But before I make an end of this firſt Propoſition, it may not be amiſs to conſider a little the Temper of thoſe *Seraphick Pretenders to Religion*, who have preſumed to refine upon it by ſuch airy, impracticable Notions, and have made ſuch a mighty Noiſe with their *Goſpel-Spirits*, *and Goſpel-Diſpenſations*, *their high Attainments*, *and wonderful Illuminations*, ſcrewing up Matters to ſuch an Height, that there is no Hope of being a *Chriſtian*, without being ſomething more than a *Man*. For ſo, I am ſure, ought he

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he to be, who, in the Doing of his Duty, muſt not be ſuffered to expect, or look for any Reward after it; nor, in his Way to Heaven, ſo much as to think of the Place which he is going to. I ſay, if we conſider the Temper of theſe High-Flyers, (who would needs impoſe ſuch a *New Chriſtianity* upon the World) are they themſelves *all Spirit* and *Life*, all *Chriſtianity ſublimate?* (as I may ſo expreſs it) are they nothing but *Self-Denial* and *Divine Love? Nothing but a pure aſcending Flame*, without any Mixture or Communication with theſe lower Elements? I muſt confeſs, I could never yet find any ſuch Thing in this Sort of Men; but on the contrary, have generally obſerved them to be as arrant Worldings, and as proud and ſelfiſh a Generation of Men, as ever diſgraced the Name of Chriſtianity by wearing it, and far from giving any other Proof, that in all their Religious Performances they never act with an Eye to a *Future Reward*, but only *this one*, that having wholly faſtened their *Eyes*, their *Hands*, and their *Hearts* alſo, *upon this World*, they cannot poſſibly, at the ſame time, place them upon another too. On the other ſide therefore, not to aſpire to ſuch *Heights and*

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Elevations in Religion, (or rather indeed *above it*,) ſince God, of his abundant Goodneſs, has been pleaſed to invite, and even court us to our Duty with ſuch liberal and glorious *Rewards*, let us neither deſpiſe *his Grace*, nor be wiſer than *his Methods*, but with Arms as open to *take*, as his are to *give*, let us embrace the Motives he has afforded us, as ſo many Springs and Wheels to our Obedience. And whoſoever ſhall piouſly, conſtantly, and faithfully do his Duty with Hopes of the *promiſed Recompence*; ſhall find, that God will not fail to make good that Promiſe to him *hereafter*, by an humble Dependence upon which he was brought to do his Duty *here*: And ſo much for our *firſt and main Propoſition*. The

2. Which (as I ſhew before) was in a manner included in the *firſt*, and ſo ſcarce needs any Proſecution diſtinct from it; is this,

That the Propoſal of a Reward on God's part, and a Reſpect had to it on Man's, are undoubtedly neceſſary to engage Men in a Courſe of Duty and Obedience.

For the Diſcuſſion of which, I ſhall briefly do theſe two Things.

1*ſt*, I

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1*ſt*, I ſhall ſhew, In what *reſpect* theſe are ſaid to be *neceſſary*. And

2*dly*, I ſhall ſhew, Why, and upon what *Reaſons*, they ought to be accounted ſo.

1. And firſt, For the Neceſſity of them. A Thing may be ſaid to be *neceſſary* two ways. As

1. When by the very Eſſence or Nature of it, it is ſuch, that it implies in it a *Contradiction*, and conſequently an *Impoſſibility*, even by the Power of God himſelf, that (the ſaid Nature continuing) it ſhould be otherwiſe. And thus, I ſhall never preſume to affirm, (though *ſome* I know do) that God cannot induce a Man (being *a free Agent*) to a Courſe of Duty and Obedience, without *propoſing a competent Reward* to ſuch Obedience. For I queſtion not, but God can ſo qualify, and *determine the Will* of a Rational Agent, (and that without the leaſt Diminution to its *natural Freedom*) that the Inclination and Byaſs of it ſhall wholly propend to Good, and that from a meer Love of Goodneſs itſelf, without any Conſideration of a *further Recompence*. And the Reaſon of this is, becauſe *all Good*, as ſuch, is in its Degree a *proper Object* for the Will to chuſe;

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and whatſoever is a *proper Object* of its Choice, is alſo *ſufficient* to draw forth, and determine the Actings of it, unleſs there interpoſe ſome ſtronger *Appetibile*, to rival or over-match it in its Choice; and yet even in this Caſe alſo, God, no doubt, can ſo ſtrengthen the Propenſity of the Will to Good, that it ſhall have no Appetite to, or Reliſh for the Pleaſures of *Senſe* at all; and conſequently ſhall need no Propoſal, either of Reward or Puniſhment, to draw it off from the *Choice* and *Purſuit* of thoſe Things, which the Grace of God has already given it ſuch an entire Averſion to. For *this*, queſtionleſs, is the preſent Condition of the Angels, and other glorified Spirits, whoſe *Will* is ſo abſolutely determined to *Good*, as to be without any *Proneneſs*, or *Diſpoſition* at all to *Evil*; and what Condition they are in at preſent, God, we may be ſure, by his Omnipotence, could have created Man in at firſt, and have preſerved him in ever ſince, had he been ſo pleaſed; ſo that there is nothing in the Thing itſelf *impoſſible*. But this, I own, affects not immediately the Caſe now before us. And therefore in the

2*d place*, A Thing may be ſaid to be *neceſſary*, not *abſolutely*, but with *reſpect to*

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that particular State and Condition, in which it is. And thus, becauſe God has actually ſo caſt the preſent Condition of Man, as to make his *Inclination to Good* but *imperfect*, and during this Life to continue it ſo, and withall, to place him amongſt ſuch *Objects*, as are mightily apt to draw him off from what is *Morally Good*, it was neceſſary, (upon the Suppoſal of ſuch a Condition) that, if God would have Men effectually *chuſe Good*, *and avoid Evil*, he ſhould ſuggeſt to them ſome further *Motives to Good*, *and Arguments* againſt *Evil*, than what the bare Conſideration of the Things themſelves prohibited, or commanded by him, can afford. For otherwiſe, that which is *Morally Good*, meeting with ſo faint and feeble an Inclination in the *Will* towards it, will never be able to make any prevailing Impreſſion upon *that leading Faculty*. From all which you ſee, in what Senſe we affirm it *neceſſary for God to propoſe Rewards* to Men, thereby to *engage them to their Duty*; namely, becauſe of that *imperfect Eſtate*, which God has been pleaſed to leave Men under in this World.

And now, in the next place, for the *Proof* of this *Neceſſity*, (which was the other Thing propoſed

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propoſed by us) theſe *two General Reaſons* may be offered.

1. *The firſt* taken from *clear Evidence of Scripture.* And the

2*d* From the conſtant *avowed Practice of all the wiſe Lawgivers* of the World.

1. And firſt for *Scripture.* It has been more than ſufficiently proved from thence already, how deplorably unable the Heart of Man is, not only *to conquer*, but even to contend with the Difficulties of *a Spiritual Courſe*, without a ſteddy View of ſuch *Promiſes*, as may ſupply new *Life*, *Spirit*, and *Vigour* to its Obedience. To all which, let it ſuffice, at preſent, to add that full, and notable Declaration of St. *Paul*, in 1 *Cor.* xv. 19. *That if in this Life only we had Hope in Chriſt, we were of all Men moſt miſerable.* And certainly, for a Man to know, that by being *a Chriſtian*, he ſhould be *of all Men moſt miſerable*, was as untoward an Argument, (ſhould we look no further) to perſuade him to be a *Chriſtian*, as could well have been thought of. So that we ſee here, how thoſe *Adepti*, thoſe *Men of Perfection* before ſpoken of, (who ſcorn *to be religious out of any Reſpect to a future Reward*) are already *got a Pitch above the third Heaven*; and

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and far beyond the utmoſt Perfection, that St. *Paul himſelf ever* pretended to. But

2. The other Proof of the ſame Aſſertion ſhall be taken from the Practice of all the *noted Lawgivers* of the World; who have ſtill found it neceſſary to back and fortify their Laws with *Rewards and Puniſhments*; theſe being the very Strength and Sinew of the *Law*, as the *Law* itſelf is of *Government*.

No wiſe Ruler ever yet ventured the Peace of Society upon the Goodneſs of Mens Nature, or the vertuous Inclination of their Temper. Nor was any Thing *truly Great and Extraordinary* ever almoſt achieved, but in the Strength of ſome Reward every whit *as Great and Extraordinary* as the Action, which it carried a Man out to. Thus, it was in the Vertue of *Saul*'s high Promiſes, that *David* encountered *Goliah*: The *Giant* indeed was the Mark he ſhot, or rather *ſlung* at, but *the King's Daughter*, and the Court Preferments were the Mark he moſt probably aimed at. For we read how inquiſitive he was, *what ſhould be done for him.* And it is not unknown, how in the Caſe of a ſcrupulous *Oath-ſick Conſcience* alſo, *Promiſe of Preferment* has been found the ableſt *Caſuiſt* to

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to reſolve it; from which, and the like Paſſages both Ancient and Modern, if we look further into the *Politicks* of the *Greeks* and the *Romans*, and other Nations of Remark in Hiſtory, we ſhall find, that, whenſoever *the Laws enjoined* any Thing *harſh*, and to the doing of which Men were naturally averſe, they always thought it requiſite, to add *Allurement* to *Obligation*, by declaring a noble Recompence (poſſibly ſome large *Penſion*, or *gainful Office*, or *Title of Honour*) to the meritorious Doers of whatſoever ſhould be commanded them; and when again, on the other ſide, the Law forbad the doing of any Thing, which Men were otherwiſe mightily inclined to do, they were ſtill forced to call in Aid from the *Rods* and the *Axes*, and other terrible Inflictions, to ſecure the Authority of the Prohibition againſt the *Bent* and *Fury* of the contrary Inclination. And this Courſe, being founded in the very Nature of *Men* and Things, was, and is as neceſſary to give Force and Efficacy to the *Divine Laws* themſelves, as to any Humane Laws whatſoever. For in vain do we think to find any Man vertuous enough *to be a Law to himſelf*, or any Law ſtrong enough to enforce and drive home its own Obligation; or

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or laſtly, the Prerogative of any *Lawgiver* high enough to aſſure to him the Subjects Obedience. For Men generally affect to be careſſed and encouraged, and (as it were) *bought to their Duty*, (as well as *from it* too ſometimes.) For which, and the like Cauſes, when God, by *Moſes*, had ſet before his own People a large Number of the moſt excellent, and (as one would think) ſelf-recommending Precepts on the one hand, and a black Roll of the very worſt and vileſt of Sins on the other, (Sins that ſeemed to carry their *Puniſhment* in their very Commiſſion) yet nevertheleſs, in the Iſſue, God found it needful to bring up the Rear of all with thoſe Decretory Words, in *Deut.* xxx. 19. *Behold, I have, this Day, ſet before you Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing.* And what he then ſet before the *Iſraelites*, he now ſets *before us*, and the *whole World* beſides; and when we ſhall have well weighed the Nature of the Things ſet before us, and conſidered *what Life is, and what Death is*, I ſuppoſe, we ſhall need neither *Inſtruction, nor Exhortation*, to which of the Two we ſhould direct our *Choice*.

And now, to cloſe up all, and to relieve your Patience, you have heard the Point ſtated

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ſtated and argued, and the Objections againſt it anſwered; after all which, what can we ſo naturally inferr from this whole Diſcourſe, as the infinite Concern, lying upon every Man, to fix to himſelf ſuch *a Principle to act by*, as may effectually bring him to that great and beatifick End, which he came into the World for?

This is moſt certain, that no Man's *Practice* can riſe higher than *his Hopes*. It is obſerved in *Aqueducts*, that no Pipe, or Conduit can force the Current of the Water higher than the Spring-Head itſelf lies, from whence the Water firſt deſcends. In like manner, it is impoſſible for a Man, who deſigns to himſelf only the *Rewards of this World*, to act in the Strength thereof, at ſuch a Rate, as ſhall bring him *to a better*. And the Reaſon of this is, becauſe whoſoever makes theſe preſent Enjoyments his whole Deſign, accounts them abſolutely the beſt Things he can have, and accordingly he looks no further, he expects no better; and if ſo, it is not to be imagined, that he ſhould ever obtain, what he never ſo much as looked for: For no Man ſhall come to Heaven by Chance.

As

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As for *Tryals and Temptations*, (thoſe fatal Rocks, which the Souls of Men are ſo apt to daſh upon) we may take this for an infallible Rule concerning them; namely, *That nothing in this World can ſupport a Man againſt ſuch Tryals, as ſhall threaten him with the utter Loſs of this World.* For the Truth is, it would imply a Contradiction, to ſuppoſe that it could; and yet theſe are the Tryals, which even wiſe Men ſo much fear, and prepare for, and know, that they ſhall ſink under and periſh by, unleſs borne up by ſomething mightier and greater than the World; and therefore, not to be found in it.

What further Tryals God may have in reſerve for us, we cannot tell; only this we may reckon upon, as a *certain*, though *ſad* Truth: That there has been a mighty growing Guilt upon this Nation for ſeveral Years. And as great Guilts naturally *portend*, as well as *provoke* great Judgments; ſo God knows, how ſoon the *black Cloud*, which has been ſo long gathering over us, may break, and pour down upon us; and how near we may be to Times, in which, he who will *keep* his Conſcience, muſt expect to *keep* nothing elſe.

For

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For nothing, certainly, can caſt a more dreadful Aſpect upon us, than thoſe monſtrous crying *Immoralities* lately *broke* in amongſt us; by which, not only the *Engliſh Vertue*, but the very *Engliſh Temper* ſeems utterly to have left us; while, to the Terror of all Pious Minds, *Foreign Vices* have *invaded us*; which threaten us more, than any *Foreign Armies* can.

As for our Excellent Church; which has been ſo maligned, and ſtruck at on all Hands; and we of this Place eſpecially; and that by ſome, whom we had little Cauſe to expect ſuch Stabs from; (to their juſt and and eternal Infamy be it ſpoke.) * We have been moreover told, and that with Spite and Inſolence enough, *That our Poſſeſſions and Privileges are very precarious*, (though yet, (Thanks be to God, and to our ancient Government) confirmed to us, by all that this Nation calls *Law*;) and withall, *that our Reign will be very ſhort*, (as no doubt, if *Republicans* might have their Will, the Reign of *all Kings* (even of King *William* himſelf) would be ſo too.)

* *See a virulent, inſulting Pamphlet, entituled*, A Letter to a Member of Parliament, *&c.* Pag. 14. *and* 52. *Printed in the Year* 1697, *and as like the Author himſelf*, W. W. *as Malice can make it.*

But

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But ſtill, bleſſed be the Almighty, we are in his Hands; and whatſoever his moſt wiſe Providence may bring upon us, we know upon what Terms our great Lord and Maſter will deal with us; having ſo fully declared himſelf, as to all theſe critical Turns and Tryals of our Obedience, in *Rev.* ii. 10. *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* God enable us to be the former, by a ſteddy, unſhaken Hope of the latter.

To which God be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

General Resurrection.

ON

ACTS XXIV. 15.

Having Hope towards God, (which they themselves also allow) that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust.

THE most wise Creator of the Universe has so formed one World, that it is not to be governed without the Help of another; nor the Actions of the Life here, to be kept in Order, without the Hopes and Fears of one hereafter. The

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The Truth is, next to God himſelf, Hopes and Fears govern all Things. They act by a Kind of Royal Deputation under him, and are ſo without Controul, that they carry all before them, by an abſolute, unlimited Sway. For ſo long as God governs the World, (which will be as long as there is a World to govern) Law muſt govern under him, and the Sanction of Rewards and Puniſhments muſt be that which enables the Law itſelf to govern: Humane Nature of itſelf being, by no means, ſo well diſpoſed, as to make its Duty the ſole Motive or Meaſure of its Obedience.

For as in other Caſes, ſo here, it is not ſo much the Hand which *binds*, as the Bond or Chain with which it binds, which muſt make good its Hold, upon the Thing or Perſon ſo bound by it. Every Man, in all that concerns him, ſtands influenced by his Hopes and Fears, and thoſe by Rewards and Puniſhments, the proper and reſpective Objects thereof; and the Divine Law is the grand Adamantine Ligament, tying both of them faſt together; by aſſuring Rewards to our Hopes, and Puniſhments to our Fears; ſo that Man being thus bound by the peremptory, irreverſible Decree of Heaven, muſt, by ver-

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tue thereof, indiſpenſably obey or ſuffer; the Sentence of the Law being Univerſal and Perpetual, either of a Work to be *done*, or a Penalty to be *Endured*.

But whether it be from the Nature or Fate of Mankind, it is no ſmall Matter of Wonder, that Man, of all Creatures, ſhould have ſuch an Averſeneſs to obey, and ſuch a Proneneſs to diſobey his Maker, that nothing under an Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery (the firſt of them unſpeakable, and the other of them intolerable) ſhould be the Means appointed to engage him to the *one*, or deterr him from the other. And it is yet a greater Wonder, that not only ſuch a Method of dealing with Men ſhould be thought *neceſſary*, but that in ſuch innumerable Inſtances it ſhould be found not ſufficient; at leaſt not effectual to the End it is intended for; as the Event of Things too fatally demonſtrates it not to be.

Nevertheleſs, ſince Almighty God has pitched upon this Method of Governing the World by Rewards and Puniſhments, a Reſurrection of the Perſons ſo to be rewarded or puniſhed, muſt needs be granted abſolutely and unavoidably Neceſſary: Nothing in this Life giving us a ſatisfactory Account,

That

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That either the Good or the Bad have been yet dealt with according to the ſtrict and utmoſt Merit of their Works. Which yet, the Juſtice of an infinitely wiſe Judge and Governor having ſo poſitively declared his Will in the Caſe, cannot but inſiſt upon. For albeit God, as *Creator of the World*, acted therein by an abſolute, ſovereign Power (always) under the Conduct of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs; yet, as *Governor* of it, his Juſtice is the prime Attribute which he proceeds by, and the Laws the grand Inſtruments whereby Juſtice acts, as *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* are the Things which give Life, Force, and Efficacy to Juſtice itſelf. Upon which Grounds, the Apoſtle gives us a full Account of the whole Matter, in that excellent Place, in 2 *Cor.* v. 10. *We muſt all*, ſays he, *appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Thus ſays the Apoſtle. But the Dead, we know, as ſuch, can receive no ſuch Things; nor are Subjects capable of Rewards or Puniſhments: So that the Sum of the Apoſtle's whole Argument amounts to this: That as certainly as God governs the World wiſely, and will

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one Day judge it righteouſly, ſo certain is it, that there muſt be a General Retribution, and, by conſequence, a General Reſurrection.

In my Diſcourſe upon which, I ſhall caſt the whole Proſecution of the Subject here to be treated of by us, under theſe three Propoſitions, *viz.*

Firſt, That a Belief of a Reſurrection from the Dead, is a Thing exceeding difficult, ſtrange, and harſh to the Diſcourſes of Natural Reaſon.

Secondly, That notwithſtanding this great Difficulty, there is yet ſufficient Reaſon, and ſolid Ground for the Belief of it. And

Thirdly and *Laſtly*, That ſuppoſing a Sufficiency of Reaſon for this Belief, all Difficulties, and ſeeming Repugnancies alledgable againſt it, do exceedingly advance the Worth, Value, and Excellency of it.

Now under theſe three Propoſitions ſhall be taken in all that we ſhall, or can ſay concerning the *General Reſurrection* at the laſt Day. And accordingly, as to the firſt of the three Propoſitions, importing the great Difficulty, Strangeneſs, and Repugnancy of the

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the Article of the *Reſurrection* to the Belief of Natural Reaſon, we find, moreover, in the Text here pitched upon by us, that the main Objection inſiſted upon by the Principal of St. *Paul*'s Oppoſers, the *Sadducees*, againſt the Doctrine preached by him, was drawn from this controverted Point of the *Reſurrection*, and of the Incredibility of the ſame, founded upon the ſuppoſed Impoſſibility thereof; which, as it was a Point of incomparably the greateſt Moment in the Practice of Religion, and conſequently with the firmeſt Steddineſs to be aſſented to, and with equal Zeal to be contended for, by our Apoſtle; ſo was it with no leſs Heat and Fierceneſs oppoſed and exploded by thoſe his forementioned Antagoniſts. In treating of which, I ſhall endeavour theſe two Things.

1. To ſhew, that there is ſuch an extraordinary Averſeneſs in Natural Reaſon to the Belief of a Reſurrection, as in the ſaid Propoſition we have affirmed that there is.

2. To aſſign the Cauſes from which this Averſeneſs proceeds.

And firſt for the firſt of theſe. The ſureſt and readieſt Way (I ſhould think) to learn the Verdict of Reaſon in this Matter, would be to proceed by the Rule and Standard of

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their Judgment, who were the most acknowledged and renowned Masters of Reason and Learning in the several Ages of the World, the Philosophers: Persons who discoursed upon the bare Principles of Natural Reason, and upon no higher; who pretended not to Revelation, but acquiesced in such Discoveries, as Nature, assisted with Industry, and improved with hard Study, could furnish them with. And this certainly was the best and likeliest Way to state the *Ne plus ultra* of Reason, and to shew how far it could, and could not go, by shewing how far it had actually gone already. And the World has had Experience in more Sorts of Learning than one, how much those, who have gone before, have surpassed in Perfection, as well as Time, those who have come after them.

Now, in the first Rank of these great and celebrated *Persons*, *Pythagoras* (the earliest, whom History reports to us to have been dignified with the Title of *Philosopher*) asserted, and taught a *Metempsychosis*, or *Transmigration* of the same Soul into several Bodies; which is utterly inconsistent with a Resurrection; the Number of Bodies upon these Terms, in so great a Proportion, exceeding

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ceeding the Number of Souls: One Soul wearing out many Bodies, as one Body does many Garments. So that the *Pythagorick* Principle can admit of no Reſurrection, unleſs there could be as many Souls as Bodies to rejoin one another; which, upon this *Hypotheſis*, cannot be.

Plato indeed ſpeaks much of the Immortality of the Soul; but by not ſo much as mentioning the Riſing of the Body again after its Diſſolution, (when yet he treated of ſo cognate a Subject) we may rationally preſume, that he knew nothing of it; and that amongſt all his Ideas, (as I may ſo expreſs it) he had none of ſuch a Reſurrection.

Ariſtotle held an Eternity of the World, *viz.* As to the Heavens and the Earth, the principal Parts of it. But as to Things mutable, he placed that Eternity in the endleſs Succeſſion of Individuals; which clearly ſhews, that he meant not, that thoſe Individuals ſhould revive and return to an endleſs Duration. For ſince he aſſerted this Succeſſion only to immortalize the Kind or Species, the Immortality of Particulars would have rendred that Succeſſion wholly needleſs.

As

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As for the *Stoicks* and *Epicureans*, who, I am ſure, were reputed the ſubtileſt and moſt Acute of all the Sects of Philoſophers, we have them in *Act.* xvii. 32. *ſcoffing at the very Mention of Riſing from the Dead.* They thought it ridiculous for animated Duſt once dead to revive, or for Man to be made or raiſed out of it, any more than once. For, if that might be, they reckoned that Men could not properly be ſaid to *die*, but rather only to *hold their Breath* for ſome Time, than totally to *loſe* it; and that Death might be called a *Sleep* without a Metaphor, if we might ſo ſoon ſhake it off, and *riſe from it again.* In ſhort, if *Zeno* or *Chryſippus* were alive, they would explode; and, if *Epicurus* himſelf ſhould *riſe from the Dead*, he would ſcarce believe a *Reſurrection.*

But to paſs from *Heathens* to thoſe who had their Reaſon further improved by Revelation, we have in the *Jewiſh* Church a great, a learned, and conſiderable Sect called the *Sadducees*, wholly diſcarding this Article from their Creed; as St. *Matthew* tells us, in *Matth.* xxii. 23. And St. *Luke*, in *Act.* xxiii. 8. *That the* Sadducees *ſay, there is no Reſurrection*, &c. as, no doubt, it was their Intereſt, (as well as Belief) that there ſhould be none.

And

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And laſtly, even for ſome of thoſe, who profeſſed Chriſtianity itſelf, and that in the famous City of *Corinth*, where moſt of the Gallantry, the Wit, and Learned Arts of *Greece* flouriſhed, we find ſome Chriſtians themſelves denying it, as appears from that elaborate Confutation, which St. *Paul* beſtowed upon them, in the xvth Chapter of his firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*.

Which Inſtances, amongſt ſeveral others aſſignable to the ſame Purpoſe, may ſuffice to ſhew, how hardly this Article finds Credit with thoſe who are led by Principles of meer Natural Reaſon; and indeed, ſo ſtrange and incredible does it appear to ſuch, (and ſome others alſo, though profeſſing higher Principles) that the ſame Power which God exerted in *raiſing Chriſt* from the *Dead*, ſeems neceſſary to raiſe ſuch Sons of Infidelity to a firm and thorough Belief of it. And ſo I come to the .

2*d* Thing propoſed, *viz.* To aſſign the Cauſes, why Natural Reaſon thus ſtarts from the Belief of a Reſurrection. And theſe may be reckoned of two ſorts.

1. Such as are taken from the manifold *Improbabilities*, rendring the Matter ſo exceeding unlikely to the Judgment of Humane

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mane Reaſon, that it cannot frame itſelf to a Belief, that there is really any ſuch Thing. And

2. Such as are drawn from the downright *Impoſſibility* charged upon it. Both which are to be conſidered. And

1*ſt*. Thoſe many great *Improbabilities* and *Unlikelihoods* alledged againſt the *Reſurrection* of the ſame Numerical Body, are apt to give a mighty Check to the Mind of Man, in yielding its Belief to it. For who would imagine, or could conceive, that when a Body, by continual Fraction and Diſſipation, is crumbled into Millions of little Atoms, ſome Portions of it rarified into *Air*, others ſublimated into Fire, and the reſt changed into Earth and Water, the Elements ſhould after all this ſurrender back their Spoils, and the ſeveral Parts, after ſuch a Diſperſion, ſhould travel from all the four Quarters of the World to meet together, and come to a mutual Interview of one another, in one and the ſame individual Body again? That God ſhould ſummon a Part out of this Fiſh, that Fowl, that Beaſt, that Tree, and remand it to its former Place, to unite into a new Combination for the re-building of a fallen Edifice, and reſtoring an old, broken, demoliſhed

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moliſhed Carcaſs to itſelf once more? So that, by ſuch a continual Circulation of Life and Death following upon one another, the Grave ſhould become not ſo much a *Concluſion*, as the *Interruption*; not the *Period*, but the *Parentheſis* of our Lives; a ſhort Interval between the Preſent and the Future, and only a Paſſage to convey us from one Life to another? Theſe Things, we muſt confeſs, are both difficult in the Notion, and hard to our Belief. For though, indeed, the Word of Truth has declared, that *all Fleſh is Graſs*, and Man but as the *Flower of the Field*; yet the Apprehenſions of Senſe will hardly be brought to acknowledge, that he therefore grows upon his own Grave, or ſprings afreſh out of the Ground. For can the Jaws of Death relent? Or the Grave (of all Things) make Reſtitution? Can Filth and Rottenneſs be the Preparatives to Glory? And Duſt, and Aſhes, the Seed-Plots of Immortality? Is the Sepulchre a Place to dreſs ourſelves in for Heaven, the Attiring Room for Corruption to put on Incorruption, and to fit us for the Beatifick Viſion? Theſe are Paradoxes, which Nature cannot well digeſt, Myſteries, which it cannot fathom; being all of them ſuch, as the common, univerſal Obſervation

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servation of the World is wholly a Stranger to.

And thus much for the first Cause, which generally keeps Men from a *Belief of the Resurrection*; namely, The great Improbabilities and Unlikelihoods attending it; but this is not all: There being yet another, and a greater Argument alledged against it, and that is in the

2*d.* And next place, The downright *Impossibilities charged upon it.* And this from the seemingly unanswerable Contradictions and Absurdities implyed in it; and (as some think) unavoidably consequent upon it. Of which, the chief, and most hardly reconcileable to the Discourses of Humane Reason, is founded in, and derivable *from*, the continual *Transmutation* of one Thing into another. For how extravagant soever the forementioned *Pythagorean* Hypothesis of the *Transmigration*, or Metempsychosis of one Soul into several Bodies, may be justly accounted to be; yet the *Transmutation* of one Body into another, ought not to be accounted so. For the Parts of a Body, we know, are in a continual Flux, and the Decays of Nature are repaired by the daily Substitution of new Matter derived from

our

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our Nutriment; and when, at length, this Body comes to be diſſolved by Death, it ſoon after returns to Earth; and that Earth is animated into Graſs, and that Graſs turned into the Subſtance of the Beaſt which eats it, and that Beaſt becomes Food to Man, and ſo, by a long Percolation, is converted into his Fleſh and Subſtance. So that ſuch Matter or Subſtance, which was once an Integral Part of this Man's Body, perhaps twenty Years after his Death, by this Round or Circle of *perpetual Tranſmutation*, comes to be an Integral Part of another Man's. Now, if there be a Reſurrection, and every Man ſhall be reſtored with his own Numerical Body perfect and complete, we may propoſe our Doubt in thoſe Words of the *Sadducees* to our Saviour, in *Matth.* xxii. 28. concerning the Woman, who had been marryed to ſeveral Husbands ſucceſſively: *To which of them ſhall ſhe belong at the laſt Day? for all of them had her.* So may it be ſaid of ſuch a Portion of *Matter* or *Subſtance*, which, by continual Change, has been an Integral Part of ſeveral Bodies: *To which of theſe Bodies ſhall it be reſtored at the Reſurrection?* For having ſucceſſively belonged to each of them, either our Bodies muſt not riſe entire, or the ſame

Portion

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Portion of Subſtance and Matter muſt be a Part of ſeveral diſtinct Bodies, and conſequently, be in ſeveral *diſtinct Places* at the ſame Time, which is manifeſtly impoſſible.

Now the Foundation of this Argument taken from the Viciſſitude, and mutual Change of Things into one another, is clear from obvious, and univerſally unconteſted Experience; and being ſo, the Reſtitution of every Soul to its own reſpective Body, and to every Integral Part of it, is a Thing to which all Principles of Natural Reaſon *ſeem* a Contradiction; and by Conſequence, (if ſo) not within the Power of Omnipotence to effect. I ſay, it *ſeems* ſo; and I will not preſume to ſay more.

The Conſideration of which drove the *Socinians*, thoſe known Enemies to *Natural*, as well as *Revealed* Religion, (whatſoever they *pretend* in Contradiction to what they *aſſert*, in behalf of both) together with ſome others, peremptorily to deny, that Men ſhall be raiſed with the ſame Numerical Bodies, which they had in this World, but with another, which, for its æthereal, refined Subſtance, they ſay, is, by St. *Paul*, termed a *Spiritual Body*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 14. And being

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being here preſſed with the very literal Signification of the Word *Reſurrection*; which implies a repeated Exiſtence of the ſame Thing, they will have it here uſed only by a Kind of *Metaphor*, *viz.* That, becauſe in Death, a Man ſeems to the Perception and View of *Senſe* utterly to periſh, and ceaſe to be, therefore his *Reſtitution* ſeems to be a Sort of *Reſurrection*. And as for thoſe *Greek* Words Ἀναςῆναι and Ἐγείρειν, they endeavour to ſhew, by other like Places of Scripture, that they ſignify no more than the bare Suſcitation, Raiſing or giving Being to a Thing, without its having fallen or periſhed before. As for Inſtance, in *Matth.* xxii. 24. Ἀναςήσει τὸ σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ, he ſhall raiſe up Seed to his Brother. And in *Rom.* ix. 17. God ſays of *Pharaoh*, διὰ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε, *for this Cauſe have I raiſed thee up*. Whereas, neither of theſe can be ſuppoſed to have periſhed, before that *Raiſing*. From whence, and ſome other ſuch like Places, they conclude; that theſe Words applyed to the preſent Caſe, import at moſt the bare Reſtauration of the Man; and that not neceſſarily by reſtoring his Soul to its old Body, but by joining it to a new; accounted indeed the ſame to all real Intents and Purpoſes of Uſe, though

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though not by formal *Identity*; they still affirming, nevertheless, the Man thus *raised*, and with his new Body, to be the same Person; forasmuch, as (they say) it is the *Soul* or *Spirit* which makes the Man, and is the proper Principle which gives the Individuation. This was their Opinion.

And thus I have done with the first of the three Propositions drawn from the Words, viz. *The exceeding great Difficulty of Mens believing a Resurrection.* And that, both by proving that actually it is so, from the most authentick Examples alledgeable in the Case, and by assigning withall the Reasons and Causes, why it comes to be so. I proceed now to the second Proposition, *viz.* To shew, That notwithstanding this Difficulty, there is yet sufficient Reason, and solid Ground for the Belief of it.

And this I shall endeavour to do, both by answering the foregoing Objections brought against the Resurrection; and withall, offering something, by way of Argument, for the positive Proof of it.

Now for the first of these. I shew, That the Resurrection was argued against upon two distinct Heads, *viz.* The *Improbabilities* attending it, and the *Impossibilities charged upon it.* And

1. Briefly,

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1. Briefly, as to the Objection from the *Improbabilities* said to attend it, and to keep Men off from the Belief of it; besides that the said Objection runs in a very loose and popular, rather than in a close and argumentative Way, and looks more like *Harangue* than *Reasoning*, (though yet the best that the Thing will bear) we are to observe yet further, That not every strange and unusual Event ought always, and under all Circumstances, to be accounted *improbable*. For where a sufficient Cause of any Thing or Event may be assigned, though above, and beyond the common Course of Natural Causes, I cannot reckon that Event or Thing, properly and strictly *improbable*. Forasmuch, as it is no ways *improbable*, that the Supreme Agent and Governor of all Things should, for some great End or Purpose, sometimes step out of the ordinary Road of his Providence, (as undoubtedly he often does) and of which there are several Instances upon Record, both in sacred and prophane Story, relating what strange Things have happened in the World, which could not rationally be ascribed to any other, but the super-natural Workings of a Divine Power. Nevertheless, admitting, but not granting

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the fore-alledged *Improbabilities* of a Reſurrection, yet this does not at all affect the Point now in Diſpute before us, which turns not properly upon the Probability, but the Poſſibility of the Thing here diſcourſed of. And where there is a Poſſibility on the one ſide, anſwered by an Omnipotence on the other, there can be no Ground to queſtion an Effect commenſurate to both. For a Reſurrection being allowed *poſſible*, though never ſo *improbable*, ſtill it is in the Number of thoſe Things which an infinite Power can do; and upon this Account we find, that there is a much higher Pitch of Infidelity, which ſtops not here, but goes ſo far on, as to deny the very *Poſſibility* of it too: And this brings me to the Examination of the

2*d* Objection produced againſt this Article of the Reſurrection, from the utter Impoſſibility thereof, (as the Objectors pretend) and that Impoſſibility (as we have ſhewn) founded upon the continual Tranſmutation of one Body into another. This, I ſay, was the Argument; and it ſeems to me to preſs the hardeſt upon the Reſurrection of the ſame Numerical Body, and to be the moſt difficult to be ſolved and anſwered of any other whatſoever. For as for thoſe, commonly

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drawn from the ſeeming Impoſſibility of bringing together ſuch an innumerable Multitude of minute Particles, as from a Body once diſſolved muſt needs be ſcattered all the World over into the ſeveral Elements of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth, and re-uniting them all together at the laſt Day: I cannot, I ſay, find any Thing in all this, either hard or puzzling, and much leſs contrary to Natural Reaſon to believe, (if we do but acknowledge an *Omniſcience* in the Agent, who is to do this great Thing, joined with an *Omnipotence* in the ſame. For, by the firſt of theſe two Perfections, he cannot but know where all, and every one of the ſaid Particles of the Body are lodged and diſpoſed of; and by the latter, he muſt be no leſs able to bring them from all Parts and Places of the Univerſe, though never ſo vaſtly diſtant from one another, and join them again together in the Reſtitution of the ſaid Body. Nothing being difficult, either for *Omniſcience* to know, or for Omnipotence to do; but when the Thing to be done, is, in the Nature of it, impoſſible; as the fore-alledged Argument would inferr the Reſurrection to be.

To which therefore, I anſwer, That the Propoſition or Aſſertion, upon which the ſaid

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Argument is grounded, is neither *evident* nor *certain*; and that we have no Assurance, that the Transmutation of an humane Body, into other animated Bodies after its Dissolution, is total, and extends to all the Parts thereof; but that there may be a considerable Portion of Matter in every Man's Body, (for of such only we now dispute) which never passes by *Transmutation* into any other animated Body, but sinks into, and rests in the common Mass of Matter, contained in the four Elements, (according to the respective Nature of each particular Element wherein it is lodged) and there continues unchanged, by any new Animation, till the last Day. But what these particular Parts are, which admit of no such further Change, and what Quantity of corporeal Substance or Matter they make or amount to, I suppose, is known only to God himself, the great *Disposer* and Governor, as well as *Maker* and Governor of the World.

And whereas it is said in the Objection, that such a continual Transmutation, as is here supposed, is evident from a general, constant, unconteſtable Experience; I deny, That the just Measures, Bounds, and Compass of this Transmutation can be exactly known

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known by, or evident to common Experience; foraſmuch, as it falls not under the Cognizance of the outward Senſes; and yet it is only that, and the repeated Obſervations made thereby, which Experience is, or can be founded upon. For who can aſſure himſelf, or any one elſe, upon his own Perſonal Sight, Hearing, or the Report of any other of his Senſes, that the whole Matter of a diſſolved Body paſſes ſucceſſively into other living Bodies, (though a great Portion of it may, and, without queſtion does) and if, on the other ſide, he cannot, upon his own Perſonal Obſervation, give a full and exact Account of this, can he pretend to tell how, and where the Providence of God has diſpoſed of the remaining Part of the ſaid diſſolved Body, which has not undergone any ſuch Change? This, I ſay, is not to be known by us, either by any Obſervation of Senſe, or Diſcourſe of Reaſon founded thereupon, and I know of no Revelation to adjuſt the Matter. So that, although it ſhould be ſuppoſed true, (which we do by no means grant to be ſo) that in the Diſſolution of every Humane Body, the whole Maſs, and every Part of the ſaid Body, underwent ſuch an entire Tranſmutation, as we have been ſpeaking

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of; yet, ſince this cannot certainly be known, it cannot come into Argumentation, as a Proof of that, which it is alledged for; unleſs we would prove an *Ignotum per æquè ignotum*, which being groſly illogical, and a meer *Petitio Principii*, can conclude nothing, nor at all affect the Subject in diſpute, one Way or other: Foraſmuch, as in every Demonſtration of the higheſt Sort, the Principles thereof ought to be *evident*, as well as *certain*.

The Sum of all therefore, is this: That every Humane Body, upon its Diſſolution, ſinks by Degrees into the Elementary Maſs of Matter: Whereof a great Part paſſes by ſeveral Animations into other Bodies; and a great Part likewiſe remains in the ſame Elementary Maſs, without undergoing any further Change. To which reſerved Portion, at the laſt Day, the Soul as the prime, individuating Principle, and the ſaid reſerved Portion of Matter, as an eſſential and radical Part of the Individuation, together with a ſufficient Supply of more Matter (if requiſite) from the general Maſs, ſhall, by the Almighty Power of God joining all thoſe together, make up and reſtore the ſame Individual Perſon; And this cuts off all Neceſſity

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of holding, that what was once an Integral Part of one Body, ſhould, at the ſame time, become an Integral Part of another, which, 'tis confeſſed, for the Reaſon before given, would make the Reſtitution of the ſame Numerical Portion of Matter to both Bodies, utterly impoſſible.

But if it be here replyed, That our Aſſertion of a *reſerved Portion of Matter* never paſſing into other animated Bodies by any further Tranſmutation, (albeit a conſiderable Portion of the ſame diſſolved Body be allowed ſo to do) is a Thing meerly *gratis dictum*; and that we have not yet poſitively proved the ſame. My Anſwer is, That in the preſent Caſe, there is no Neceſſity of proving, that it is actually ſo; but it is ſufficient to our Purpoſe, that the Contrary cannot be proved, and that nothing hinders, but that *it may be ſo*; the Thing being in itſelf *poſſible:* And if that be granted, then the Argument, founded upon the ſuppoſed Impoſſibility of it, comes to nothing. Foraſmuch, as being poſſible, it falls within the *Compaſs of God's Omnipotence*, which is the great Attribute to be employed in this Caſe. And this effectually overthrows the whole Force of the Objection.

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But if it be further argued, That the great Addition of Matter to be made, at the laſt Day, out of the common Maſs, to thoſe *Remainders of Matter*, which (having belonged to the ſame Man's Body formerly) are then to be compleated into a perfect Body again, ſeems inconſiſtent with the Numerical Identity of the Body which was before, and that which ſhall be afterwards at the Reſurrection; I anſwer, that this is no more inconſiſtent with the Numerical Identity thereof, than the Addition of ſo great a Quantity of new Matter, as comes to be made to a Man's Body, by a continual Augmentation of all the Parts of it, from his Birth to his full Stature, makes his Body numerically another at his grown Age, from that which the ſame Perſon had while he was yet an Infant. In both which Ages, nevertheleſs, the Body is ſtill reckoned but one and the ſame in *Number*, though in Diſparity of Bulk and Subſtance, twenty to one greater in the latter, than in the former. Accordingly, ſuppoſe we further, that only ſo much Matter, as has ſtill continued in our Bodies, from our coming into the World, to our going out of it, ſhall be re-united to our Soul at the Reſurrection, even that may, and will be ſufficient

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ficient to conſtitute our *glorified Body* in a real, numerical Identity with that *Body*, which the Soul was in before, ſo as, upon all Accounts, to be ſtill the ſame Body, though in thoſe ſo very different States and Conditions.

And therefore, the Opinion of the *Socinians*, *viz.* That the Soul, at the Reſurrection, ſhall be cloathed with another and quite different Body, from what it had in this Life, (whether of *Æther*, or ſome ſuch like ſublimated Matter) moved thereto by the forementioned Objections, and the like, ought not to be admitted: It being contrary to Reaſon, and all ſound Philoſophy, that the Soul ſucceſſively united to two entirely diſtinct Bodies, ſhould make but one and the ſame Numerical Perſon: Since though the Soul be indeed the prime and chief Principle of the Individuation of the Perſon, yet it is not the ſole and adequate Principle thereof; but the Soul, joined with the Body, makes the adequate, individuating Principle of the Perſon. Nor will any true Philoſophy allow, that the Body was ever intended for the meer Garment of the Soul, but for an eſſential, conſtituent Part of the Man, as really as the Soul itſelf: And the Difference of

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an Eſſential Half in any Compoſition, will be ſure to make an Eſſential Difference in the whole Compound. Nor is this *Socinian* Aſſertion more contrary to the Principles of Philoſophy, than to the expreſs Words of Scripture; which are not more poſitive in affirming a Reſurrection, than in declaring a Reſurrection of the ſame Numerical Perſon; and whereas, they ſay, that they grant, that the ſame Numerical Perſon ſhall riſe again, though not the ſame Body, (the Soul (as they contend) ſtill individuating any Body, which it ſhall be cloathed with) we have already ſhewn, on the contrary, that the Perſon cannot be numerically the ſame, when the Body is not ſo too; ſince the Soul is not the ſole Principle of Perſonal Individuation, though the chief; beſides that it ſeems very odd, and no ways agreeable to the common Sentiments of Reaſon, to ſay, That any Thing riſes again, which had never periſhed nor fallen before, as it is certain, that the Body, which theſe Men ſuppoſe ſhall be united to the Soul at the laſt Day, never did. But to elude the Force of this Argument, the *Socinians* pretend, that the Words, whereby we would inferr a Reſurrection of the ſame Body, to wit, ἀναςῆναι, ἐγείρειν, and ἐγείρεσθαι, &c.

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inferr no ſuch Thing in the ſeveral Texts, from whence they are alledged, but only import a bare Suſcitation, or Raiſing up of a Thing, without any Neceſſity of ſuppoſing it to have periſhed before, as being often applyed to Things entirely produced *De Novo.* But the Anſwer to this, is not difficult, *viz.* That the Point now before us is not wholly determinable from the bare Grammatical Uſe of theſe Words; (according to which we deny not, but that they ſometimes import a meer Suſcitation or Production of a Thing, without ſuppoſing any precedent Deſtruction of the ſame;) but the Senſe of theſe Words muſt be ſometimes alſo determined, by the particular State and Circumſtance of the Objects, to which they are applyed; as when they are applyed to, and uſed about Things bereaved of their former Exiſtence; (as Perſons dead, and departed this Life, manifeſtly are) and in ſuch a Caſe, whenſoever the Words ἀναςῆναι, ἐγείρειν, and ἐγείρεσθαι come to be ſo applyed, I affirm, that they can, with no tolerable Accord to common Senſe and Reaſon, be allowed to ſignify any Thing elſe, but the *Repetition* or *Reſtitution* of Loſt-Exiſtence, or (in other Words) the Re-Suſcitation of that which had periſhed before.

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And thus much in anſwer to the Objection brought to prove the Impoſſibility of a Reſurrection of the ſame Numerical Body founded upon the continual Tranſmutation of one Body into another. The Sum of all amounting to this, *viz.* That if the Tranſmutation of Humane Bodies, after Death, into other animate Bodies ſucceſſively, be total, the Objection, founded upon ſuch a Tranſmutation, is not eaſy to be avoided; and if, on the other ſide, it be not total, I cannot ſee how it proves, that the Reſtitution of the ſame Numerical Body carries in it any Contradiction, nor conſequently any Impoſſibility at all. For the Point now before us depending chiefly upon the due Stating of the Object of an Infinite Power; if the Thing, in diſpute, be but poſſible, it is ſufficient to overthrow any Argument that would pretend to prove, that an Omnipotence cannot effect it. Which Conſideration having been thus offered by us, for the clearing of the forecited Objection, we ſhall now proceed in the

2*d* Place, to produce ſomething (as we promiſed) by way of poſitive Proof for the evincing of a Reſurrection, notwithſtanding all the Difficulties and Repugnancies which ſeem to attend it. And here, ſince this is a Point

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Point of Religion, knowable only by Revelation, it cannot be positively proved, or made out to us any other Way, than by Revelation, that is to say, by what God has declared in his written Word concerning it. For Natural Reason and Philosophy will afford us but little Assistance in a Case so extreamly above both. Accordingly, since Revelation is our only competent Guide in this Matter, the Natural Method, I conceive, for us to proceed by in our Discourses thereupon, must be this, *viz.* That whereas the Objection is, that the Resurrection of the same Numerical Body implies in it a Contradiction, and therefore cannot possibly be, even by the Divine Power itself. The proper Answer to this ought to be by an Inversion of the same Terms after this manner, *viz.* That God has declared, that he will, and therefore can raise the same Numerical Body at the last Day. So that the Sum of the whole Matter turns upon this Point; to wit, whether, that which we judge *to be*, or not to be a Contradiction ought to measure the Extent of the Divine Power; or, on the other side, *the Divine Power* to determine what is, or is not to be accounted by us a *Contradiction*. And the Difficulty on either

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either ſide ſeems not Inconſiderable. For if we take the firſt of theſe Methods, this Inconvenience will attend it; That the Meaſure we make uſe of, is always ſhort of the Thing we apply it to; as a Finite muſt needs be ſhort of an Infinite; and ſometimes alſo falſe, and thereby not only ſhort of it, but moreover diſagreeable to it; it being very poſſible, (becauſe indeed very frequent) that the Mind of Man, even with its utmoſt Sagacity, may be miſtaken, and judge that to imply a Contradiction, which really does not ſo. But, on the other hand, if we make the Divine Power the Meaſure, whereby we ought to judge what *is*, or what is not a Contradiction, we make that a Meaſure, which we do not throughly underſtand or comprehend; and that is contrary to the very Nature and Notion of a Meaſure; foraſmuch, as that by which we would underſtand another Thing, ought to be firſt underſtood itſelf. But how ſhall we be able to underſtand the Extent of an infinite Power; ſo as to know certainly, how far it can go, and where it muſt ſtop, and can go no further? As if we ſhould argue thus. This or that implies in it no Contradiction, becauſe God, by his Divine Power, can effect it;

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it, I think the Inference very good: But for all that, it may be replyed, how do you know, what an Infinite or Divine Power can or cannot do? Certain it is, that it cannot deſtroy itſelf, or put an End to its own Being; and poſſibly there may be ſome other Things (unknown to us) which are likewiſe under an Incapacity of being done by it. And how then ſhall we govern our Speculations in this arduous and perplexing Point? For my own part, I ſhould think it not only the Safeſt, but in all reſpects the moſt Rational Way, in any Doubtful Caſe, where the Power of Almighty God is concerned, to aſcribe as much to him, as his Divine Nature and Attributes ſuffer us to do. That is to ſay, that we rather preſcribe to our Reaſon from his Power, than to his Power from any Rule or Maxim taken up by our Reaſon. And ſince there is a Neceſſity of ſome *Rule* or other to proceed by, in forming a Judgment of God's Power, no leſs than of his other Perfections; let God's *Word* or Revelation, (in the Name of all that pretends to be *ſenſible* or *rational*) founded upon his infallible Knowledge of whatſoever he ſays or reveals, (and confirmed by his eſſential *Veracity* inſeparably attending

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it) be *that great Rule* for us to judge by. For a better (I am ſure) can never be aſſigned, nor a ſafer relyed upon. And accordingly, when our Saviour was to anſwer the *Sadducees*, diſputing upon this very Subject, the *Reſurrection*; He argues not from any Topick of Common Reaſon, or Natural Philoſophy, but wholly from the *Power of God*, as declared by *the Word of God. Do ye not therefore err*, (ſays he) *Mar.* xii. 24. *becauſe ye know not the Scriptures, neither the Power of God?* Or, in other Words, *the Power of God, as declared in Scripture?* Our Saviour went no further with them, as knowing this to have been home to the Point, and ſufficient for their Conviction. And upon the ſame Account, thoſe remarkable Paſſages in the Evangeliſts cannot but be of mighty Weight in the preſent Caſe. As that particularly in *Matth.* xix. 26. and in *Mar.* x. 27. In both which it is plainly and poſitively affirmed, *that with God all Things are poſſible*; and yet more particularly in *Luk.* xviii. 27. where Chriſt, ſpeaking of ſome *Things accounted with Men impoſſible*, tells us, *that the Things impoſſible with Men, were poſſible with God.* The Antitheſis, we ſee here, is clear and full enough; and yet even with Men

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Men nothing uſes to be accounted impoſſible, but what is judged by them one Way or other to imply in it a Contradiction; and if ſo, it is evident, that the Divine Power may extend to ſome Things, which, in the Judgments of Men, paſs for Contradictions; and conſequently, that, what according to their Judgments implies in it a Contradiction, cannot be always a juſt Meaſure of what is impoſſible for God to do. Nevertheleſs, in order to the better underſtanding of this Matter, I conceive, it may not be amiſs to diſtinguiſh here of two Sorts of Contradictions.

1. Such as appear immediately and ſelf-evidently ſo, from the very Terms of the Propoſition, wherein they are expreſſed. The Predicate implying in it a direct *Negation* of the *Subject*, and the Subject mutually of the *Predicate*; ſo that, upon the bare Underſtanding of the Signification of the Terms or Parts of the Propoſition, we cannot but apprehend and ſee the Contradiction couched under them, and the utter Inconſiſtency of the *Idea* of one, with the *Idea* of the other: As if, for inſtance, we ſhould ſay, That Light is Darkneſs, or that Darkneſs is Light; or that a Piece of Bread of *about an*

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Inch in Breadth, and *of an Inch in Length*, is a Man's Body of about a Yard and an half in *Length*, and of a proportionable Size in *Breadth*; *each* of theſe Propoſitions or Aſſertions would import a direct and evident Negation of the other, upon the very firſt Sight or Hearing, without any further Examination of them at all. But then

2. There is another Sort of *Contradictions*; which may not improperly be termed *Conſequential*. That is to ſay, ſuch as ſhew themſelves, not by the immediate *Self-evidence of the Terms*, but by Conſequences and Deductions drawn from ſome known Principle by humane Ratiocination or Diſcourſe, and the Judgment which Men uſe to paſs upon Things in the Strength and Light thereof. In all which, ſince Men may be deceived, (nothing being more incident to common Humanity, than Miſtake) ſuch Contradictions cannot be ſo far relyed upon, as to be taken for a perfect and ſure Meaſure of what the Divine Power can, or cannot do. As for inſtance, if we ſhould ſay, 'That for 'a Body having been once deſtroyed, and 'tranſmuted into other humane Bodies, or 'ſome Parts thereof ſucceſſively to be re-'ſtored again with all the Parts of it com-'plete,

'plete, *and numerically the ſame*, is a *Con-*
'*tradiction*; it is certain, however, that the Contradiction here charged, does not manifeſtly appear *ſuch* from any *Evidence of the Terms*, but is only gathered by ſuch Conſequences and Inferences, as Men form to themſelves in their Diſcourſes upon this Subject; and therefore, though poſſibly a Truth, yet can be no clear *Proof*, that it is impoſſible for an infinite Power to do that, which is here ſuppoſed, and ſaid to be a Contradiction. But, on the other ſide, touching the firſt Sort of Contradictions mentioned by us, and ſhewing themſelves by the immediate *Self-evidence of the Terms*; theſe, no doubt, ought to be looked upon by us, out of the Sphere or Compaſs of Omnipotence itſelf to effect. Or otherwiſe, that old, and univerſally received *Rule*, viz. *That the Divine Power extends to the doing of every Thing, not implying in it a Contradiction*, muſt be exploded, and laid aſide by us, as utterly uſeleſs and fallacious.

But now with reference to the foregoing Diſtinction *of prime and conſequential Contradictions*; if it ſhould be here asked, Whether a Contradiction of the latter Sort be not as really, and as much a Contradiction, as one

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of the former: I grant, that it is; (there being no *Magis* and *Minus* in Contradictions) but nevertheleſs, not ſo manifeſtly, nor ſo evidently ſuch, nor conſequently of ſo much Force in *Argumentation*, nor equally capable of having a Concluſion, or Inference drawn from it, as the other is. For we are to obſerve, that in the Caſe now before us, a Contradiction is not ſo much conſidered for what it is barely in itſelf, as for its being a *Medium* to prove ſomething elſe by it; and for that Reaſon, we allow not the ſame concluſive Force (though the ſame *Reality*, could it be proved) to a *conſequential* Contradiction, which we allow to a *prime* and *ſelf-evident* one, and ſuch as ſhews itſelf to the very firſt View, in and by the *bare Terms* of the Propoſition, wherein it is contained.

Upon the whole Matter therefore, if by true and ſound Reaſoning I ſtand aſſured, That God has affirmed or declared a Thing, all Objections againſt the ſame, though never ſo ſtrong, (even *Reaſon* itſelf, upon the ſtricteſt Principles of it, being Judge) muſt of Neceſſity fall to the Ground. Foraſmuch, as *Reaſon* itſelf cannot but acknowledge that Men of the beſt Wit, Learning, and Judgment,

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ment, may ſometimes take that for a Contradiction, which really is not ſo; but ſtill, on the other ſide, muſt own it utterly impoſſible for a Being infinitely perfect, holy, and true, either to *deceive*, or be *deceived* in any Thing affirmed or atteſted by it. And moreover, to carry this Point yet ſomething further. If a Propoſition be once ſettled upon a ſolid Bottom, and ſufficiently proved, it will and muſt continue to be ſo, notwithſtanding any After-Arguments, or Objections brought againſt it, whether we can anſwer and clear off the ſaid Objections, or no; I ſay, it leſſens not our Obligation to believe ſuch a Propoſition one Jot. And if the whole Body of Chriſtians, throughout all Places and Ages, ſhould with one Voice declare, that they could not ſolve the foregoing Objection urged againſt the Reſurrection, and taken from the continual Tranſmutation of Bodies into one another, or any other ſuch-like Arguments, it would not abate one Degree of Duty lying upon them, to acknowledge and embrace the ſaid Article, as an indiſpenſable Part of their Chriſtian Faith; nor would they be at all the worſe Chriſtians, for not being able to give a Philoſophical Account or Solution thereof; ſo long as, with a *non*

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obſtante to all ſuch Difficulties, they ſtedfaſtly adhered to, and acquieſced in the Article itſelf. For, ſo far as I can ſee, this whole Controverſy depends upon, and ought to be determined by the Scriptures, as wholly turning upon theſe two Points, *viz.* 1*ſt*, Whether a future General Reſurrection be affirmed and revealed in the Scriptures, or no? And 2*dly*, Whether the ſaid Scriptures be the Word of God? And if the Matter ſtands thus, I am ſure, that none can juſtly pretend to the Name of a Chriſtian, who in the leaſt doubts of the Affirmative in either of theſe two Points. And conſequently, if this Article ſtands thus proved, all Arguments formed againſt it, upon the Stock of Reaſon or Philoſophy, come too late to ſhake it; for they find the Thing already fixed and proved, and being ſo, it cannot, by After-Allegations, be diſproved. Since it being alſo a Propoſition wholly founded upon Revelation; and the Authority of the Revelation upon the Authority of the Revealer, all Arguments from any Thing elſe are wholly foreign to the Subject in diſpute; and accordingly, ought, by no means, to be admitted, either as neceſſary Proofs of it, or ſo much as competent Objections againſt it. For whatſoever

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is contrary to the Word or Affirmation of a Being infinitely knowing, and eſſentially infallible, let it carry with it never ſo much Shew of Truth, yet it certainly is, and can be nothing elſe but Fallacy and Impoſture. And upon this one Ground I firmly do, and ought to believe a General Reſurrection, though ten thouſand Arguments from the Principles of Natural Philoſophy could be oppoſed to it. But may it not then, you will ſay, upon the ſame Terms be here argued, that *Jeſus Chriſt* (who is God Bleſſed for ever) having expreſly ſaid of the Bread in the Holy Sacrament, *This is my Body*, we ought to believe the ſaid Piece of Bread to be really and ſubſtantially his Body, how much ſoever we may apprehend it to contradict the Principles of Senſe, Reaſon, and Philoſophy? To this I anſwer; That the Words here alledged, as pronounced by our Saviour, are confeſſedly in the Holy Scripture. But that every Thing affirmed by God in Scripture, is there affirmed and intended by him, *literally*, *properly*, and *not figuratively*; This I utterly deny. And ſince it is agreed to by all, (and even by thoſe, whom in this Matter, we contend with) that many Expreſſions in Scripture cannot be underſtood but

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but by a *Figure*; and ſince, moreover, I grant and aſſert, that every Thing affirmed by God in Holy Scripture, ought to be believed in that Senſe only, in which it is ſo affirmed, I will venture to allow the Perſons, who are for the *literal Senſe* of thoſe particular Words againſt the *figurative*, till Doomſ-Day, to prove, that the *literal* Senſe only ought to take Place here, and the *figurative* to be exploded, and ſet aſide; and if they can but prove this, I ſhall not fail (as I ſaid before) to believe and aſſent to the Thing ſo proved, whatſoever that, which the World calls Common Reaſon and Philoſophy, ſhall, or can ſuggeſt, and offer to the contrary.

And this, I hope, may ſuffice to have been ſpoken upon the ſecond Propoſition aſſigned for the Proſecution of this Subject, namely, *That notwithſtanding all the Difficulties and Objections alledged againſt the Article of a General Reſurrection, there is yet ſufficient Reaſon, and ſolid Ground for the Belief of it.* From whence we ſhould now proceed to treat of the third and laſt Propoſition, to wit, ‘ *That* ‘ *a Sufficiency of Reaſon being thus given for* ‘ *the Belief of the ſaid Article, all the Diffi-* ‘ *culties, and ſeeming Repugnancies to Rea-* ‘ *ſon, which it is charged with, do exceedingly*

‘ *enhance*

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enhance the Worth, Value, and Excellency of that Belief.

But this, as I reckon, having been, in Effect, done by us already; and the whole Matter ſet in a full View, partly by clearing off the Objections, pretended to be brought againſt it, from Natural Reaſon, in the two foregoing Propoſitions; and partly by eſtabliſhing the Proof thereof, upon the ſure Baſis of thoſe three great Attributes of God, His Omniſcience, his Omnipotence, and his Eſſential Veracity, all of them employed to warrant and engage our Aſſent to it; we ſhall now at length come to conſider the ſame more particularly in ſome of the Conſequences deducible from it. Such as are theſe Two that follow. As

1. We collect from hence the utter Inſufficiency of bare Natural Religion, to anſwer the proper Ends and Purpoſes which God intended Religion for. And

2. We inferr from hence alſo, the Diabolical Impiety of the *Socinian Opinions*; and particularly of thoſe relating to the *Reſurrection*. And here

1. For the firſt of theſe, the *Inſufficiency* of Natural Religion, to anſwer the proper Ends which Religion was deſigned for. This

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is most certain; That *Natural Religion* exceeds not the Compass of *Natural Reason*; it neither looks higher, nor reaches further, but both of them are commensurate to one another; and it is every whit as certain, That the Soul of Man being the proper Seat and Subject of Religion, must needs be allowed to be immortal; and being withall both endued with, and acted by the Affections of *Hope* and *Fear*, that it must be supplyed with Objects proper and adequate to both, which yet nothing under an eternal Happiness with respect to the one, and an eternal Misery with reference to the other, together with a General Resurrection from the Dead, to render Men capable of either, can possibly be. So that it is manifest from the very Nature and Essentials of Religion, supposing it perfect, that the Particulars now alledged by us, necessarily do, and must come up to the *Utmost* of what they stand alledged for. But then, on the other hand, can meer Natural Reason of itself, by full Evidence and Strength of Argument, convince us of any of the aforesaid Particulars? As for instance, can it demonstrate, that the Soul is *immortal*? Or can it certainly prove, that there is a Future and Eternal State of Happiness, or of Misery in

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in another Life? And that, in order to it, there ſhall be a Reſurrection of their mortal Bodies after an utter Diſſolution of them into Duſt and Aſhes? No, there is nothing in bare Reaſon, that can ſo much as pretend to evince demonſtratively any of theſe Doctrines or Aſſertions. And what then can Natural Religion do or ſay in the Caſe? For where the former is at a ſtand, the latter can go no further; ſo that there is an abſolute Neceſſity, if we would have any more certain Knowledge of theſe Matters, to fetch it from *Revelation.* Foraſmuch as the great Apoſtle himſelf aſſures us, in 1 *Cor.* ii. 9. *That Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, what Things God has prepared for thoſe that love him*; nor conſequently, (by a Parity of Reaſon) what Miſeries he has prepared for thoſe that hate him. And if both of them are at a perfect Non-plus, and Baffle to all Humane Underſtanding; is it poſſible for Natural Reaſon to comprehend *what the Heart of Man cannot conceive?* Nothing certainly can be a groſſer Contradiction, and that in the very Terms of it, than ſuch an Aſſertion. But ſome perhaps may here ſay, That though Natural Reaſon, by its own Strength and Light,

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Light, cannot give us a clear and particular Account, *what theſe Things are:* Yet it may however be able to diſcover to us, *that really there are ſuch Things.* But in anſwer to this alſo, the ſame Apoſtle tells us, in 2 *Tim.* i. 10. *That it was our Saviour Chriſt who brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel.* That is to ſay, cleared off all Doubts about the immortal State and Being of the Soul, the everlaſting Felicities of the Righteous, and the *never-dying Worm,* and Torments of the Wicked in another World. Touching all which, I affirm, that nothing but Divine *Revelation* could give any ſolid Satisfaction to the Minds of Men, either as to the *quid ſit,* or the *quod ſit* of theſe Things; that is to ſay, either by declaring the Nature of them, *what they are;* or by proving the Exiſtence and Being of them, *that they are;* beſides, that the very Expreſſion of *bringing a Thing to Light,* muſt needs import its being hidden or undiſcovered (at leaſt to any conſiderable Purpoſe) before. But ſome poſſibly may here further object, That the Heathens could not but, long before the Times of our Saviour, have had a competent Knowledge of theſe Matters. For did they not, by what they

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discourſed of the *Elyſian* Fields, intend thereby to expreſs the Future Bleſſedneſs of pious and vertuous Perſons? And by what they taught of *Styx*, *Acheron*, and *Cocytus*, and the Torments of *Prometheus*, *Ixion*, and other famous Criminals, deſign likewiſe to ſet forth to us the Future Miſeries of the Wicked and Flagitious? No doubt, they meant ſo: But ſtill all this was built upon ſuch weak and fabulous Grounds, that the wiſer Sort of them did but deſpiſe and laugh at all theſe Things. So that *Juvenal* ſpeaking of theſe Matters, tells us in plain Terms, *Vix pueri credunt*, that Children ſcarce believed them; though ſurely, if any Thing could diſpoſe the Mind of Men to an extravagant Credulity, one would think, that the Age and State of *Childhood* ſhould. And then, as for the Immortality of the Soul, whatſoever *Plato* and other Philoſophers might argue in behalf thereof, yet I am abundantly ſatisfied, that neither *Plato* nor all of them together have been able to argue more cloſe and home to this Subject, than thoſe Wits, who have lived in the Ages after them, have done. And yet, upon the Reſult of all, I do not find, that any Thing hitherto has been ſo clearly and irrefragably proved

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proved for the Immortality of it; but that the moſt that can be done upon this Argument, is, That the Soul cannot be proved by any Principle of Natural Reaſon to be mortal. And that (though it does not prove ſo much as it ſhould do) is yet, I think no inconſiderable Point or Step gained; but after all, admitting the Proof hereof to be as full and convincing as we could wiſh, then what can Natural Reaſon ſay to a General Reſurrection from the Dead, that main Article which we are now inſiſting upon? Why, truly nothing at all: And if this be the utmoſt, which is to be had from Natural Reaſon upon this Point, I am ſure, there is no more to be had from Natural Religion; which (to make the very beſt and moſt of it) is nothing but *Reaſon, not aſſiſted by Revelation.* But

2. *The other Thing*, which we ſhall inferr from the foregoing Particulars, is, the horrible Impiety of the *Socinian Opinions*; and particularly of thoſe relating to the *Reſurrection*, and the State of Mens Souls after Death. The *Socinians*, who have done their Utmoſt to overthrow the *Credenda* of Chriſtianity, are not for ſtopping there, but for giving as great a Blow to the *Agenda* of it too,

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too, by subverting (if possible) those Principles which are to support the Practice of it. Amongst which, I reckon one of the chief to be, the Belief of those eternal Torments awarded by God to Persons dying in a State of Sin and Impenitence, one of the most powerful Checks to Sin, doubtless, of any that Religion affords: Forasmuch as where there is one with-held from Sin, by the Hopes of those eternal *Joys* promised in the Scripture; I dare affirm, that there are an hundred at least, (if not more) kept from it by the Fears of eternal *Torments*. And the Reason of this is, because those Things, by which the *Joys of Heaven* are represented to us, do, by no means, make so quick and lively an Impression upon Mens Minds, as those, by which the *Torments of Hell*, as they are described to us, are found to do. I am far, I confess, from affirming, that this ought to be so; but as the State of Mankind now generally is, there are but too many, and too manifest Proofs, that actually it is so. And I do not in the least question, but that there are Millions, who would readily part with all their Hopes of the *Future Felicities*, which the Scripture promises them, upon Condition, that they might be secured from

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* *They deny the Torments of Hell, and give this Reason for it.* Quòd absurdum sit, Deum irasci in æternum, & peccata creaturarum finita pœnis infinitis mulctare, præsertim cùm nulla hinc ipsius gloria illustretur. *Compendiolum Doctrinæ Ecclesiarum in Poloniâ. Likewise* Ernestus Sonnerus, *a noted* Socinian, *has wrote a just Treatise, with this Title prefixed to it,* Demonstratio Theologica & Philosophica, Quòd æterna impiorum supplicia non arguant Dei justitiam, sed injustitiam. *And if they be unjust, we may be sure, (as Dr.* Tillotson *in his Sermon on* Matth. xxv. 46. *learnedly observes) that there shall be no such Thing. And to shew further, how industrious these Factors for the Devil are, to rid Mens Minds of the Grand Restraint of Sin, the Belief of eternal Torments, he sets down at the End of his Demonstration (as he calls it) several Places of Scripture, where the Words* [Eternal] *and* [for ever] *signify not an infinite or everlasting, but only a finite, though indefinite Duration. Likewise* Diodorus Camphuysen, *one of the same Tribe, with a frontless Impudence, in a certain Epistle of his, requires such as should read it,* Negare & ridere damnatorum pœnas, & cruciatus æternos; *That is, not only to deny, but also to laugh at the eternal Torments and Punishments of the Damned. And to make yet surer Work, (if possible)* Socinus *denies the Soul even a Capacity of being tormented after a Man's Death.* Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse, post hanc vitam, animam, sive animum hominis non ita per se subsistere, ut præmia ulla pœnásve sentiat, vel etiam ista sentiendi sit capax, quæ mea firma Opinio, &c. Socinus in quintâ Epistolâ ad Volkelium. *And elsewhere,* Homò, sive anima humana nihil cum immortalitate habet commune. *In short, I am so far from accounting the Author or Owners of such horrid Assertions to be really Christians, that I account them really the worst of Men, if Prophaneness, Blasphemy, and the letting loose all Sorts of Wickedness upon the World, can make them so. For, according to these Grand Agents and Apostles of* Satan, *wicked Men, no less than the very Brutes themselves, (whose* Spirits also they affirm to return to God, *as well as those of the other)* being once dead, shall rise no more. *And if they can but persuade Men,* That they shall die like Beasts, *there is no Question to be made, but that most of them will be quickly brought* to live like Beasts too.

| the *eternal Torments* which it threatens.* And there-

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fore, what a mighty Encouragement muſt the Denial of *eternal Puniſhments* needs be to all Sorts of Wickedneſs in the Lives of Men? And what ſhall be able to reſtrain the Progreſs and Rage of it, in the Courſe of the World, when Sinners ſhall be told, That after all the Villanies committed by them here, nothing is to be expected or feared by them, when they have quitted this Life, but a total Annihilation or Extinction of their Perſons, together with an endleſs Continuance under the ſaid Eſtate? And is not this, think we, a ſort of *eternal Puniſhment* according to the Sinners own Hearts Deſire? For ſince it ſo utterly bereaves him of all Senſe, that he can *feel* nothing hereafter, let him alone to *fear* as little here. And as for the *Reſurrection from the Dead*, the ſame Men generally deny, *That the Wicked ſhall have any at all*; it being (as they affirm) intended by God for a peculiar Favour and Priviledge to the Godly, who *alone are to be the Sons of the Reſurrection.* But then, if theſe Men find themſelves pinched by ſuch Scriptures, as that of the 25th of St. *Matthew*, and this of my Text, ſo expreſly declaring *a Reſurrection*, both *of the Juſt and the Unjuſt*; in this Caſe, ſome of them have ano-

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ther Aſſertion to fly to; namely, that the Wicked ſhall indeed be raiſed again at the laſt Day, but immediately after ſuch a Reſuſcitation, ſhall be annihilated and deſtroyed for ever: An Aſſertion ſo intolerably Abſurd, and ſo manifeſtly a Scoff upon Religion, that none but an *Atheiſt* or *Socinian* (another Word for the ſame Thing) could have been ſo prophane, as even to think of it, or ſo impudent, as to own or declare it. In fine, ſuch is the diabolical Impiety, and the miſchievous Influence of the foregoing Opinions upon the Practices of Mankind, and conſequently upon the Peace and Welfare of Societies and Governments, (all depending upon the ſaid Practices) that all ſober and pious Minds do even groan under the very Thoughts of ſuch foul Invaſions upon Religion; and cannot but wonder, even to Amazement, that the Maintainers of ſuch Tenets, were not long ſince delivered over into the Hands of Civil Juſtice, to receive condign Puniſhment by the Sentence of the Judge; as likewiſe, that thoſe who *deny the Divinity and Satisfaction of our Saviour*, explode *Original Sin*, and revive ſeveral of the old condemned Blaſphemies, have not long before this been brought under the Cenſures

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of the Church *in Convocation*; but if, on the contrary, the Sheltring of some such rotten Church-men, as well as several others, from the Dint of Ecclesiastical Authority, was one great Cause of that so long and unaccountable Omission of those sacred and most useful Assemblies, for many Years together, since the Restauration, (as many wise and good Men shrewdly suspect it was) is it not just with God, and may it not (for ought we know) actually provoke him to deprive us even of the *Christian Religion itself?* For assuredly, that lewd, scandalous, and ungrateful Usage, which it has (of late Years especially) found from some of the highest Pretenders to it amongst us, has not only *deserved*, but upon too great Grounds of Reason, seems also to prognosticate and fore-bode, and even cry out for no less a Judgment upon the Nation. But howsoever God (*whose Ways are unsearchable*) shall think fit to dispose of, and deal with us, let us not vainly flatter ourselves; but as we have been hitherto proving the *Certainty* of a General Resurrection, so let us still remember, that the Day of *the Resurrection* will be as certainly a Day of *Retribution too*. A *Day*, in which the *proudest and most exalted Hypocrite* shall be

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brought *low enough*, and even the *loweſt Hypocrites* much lower than they deſire to be. A Day, in which the meaneſt and moſt abject (if ſincere) Member of our Excellent (how much ſoever ſtruck at and maligned) Church, ſhall be raiſed to a moſt happy and *glorious Condition.* Though, whether or no the Church itſelf (God bleſs it) be, in the mean time, in ſo *flouriſhing an Eſtate*, (as ſome would perſuade us it is) I ſhall not, I muſt not preſume to determine.

Now to God, the great Judge and Rewarder of Men, according to the Vileneſs of their Principles, as well as the Wickedneſs of their Practices, be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

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The Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity aſſerted, and proved not contrary to Reaſon: In a SERMON preached between the Years 1663 and 1670, before the Univerſity of *Oxon.*

UPON

Col. ii. 2. Latter Part.

— *To the Acknowledgment of the Myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.*

Εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

IN the handling and aſſerting of the Doctrine of the Trinity, I do not remember any Place ſo often urged, and ſo much inſiſted upon by Divines, as that in 1 *Joh.* v. 7. *There are Three who bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and*

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these Three are One: A Text fully containing in it the Doctrine of three distinct Divine Persons, in one and the same Blessed and Eternal Godhead; a Doctrine unanimously received by the Catholick Christian Church; and warranted by the Testimony of the most ancient, genuine, and unexceptionable Records or Copies of the New Testament, as well as of the most noted of the Fathers concerning it; and that not only as of a single Article, but rather as the Sum Total of our Christian *Faith*, and not so much a Part or Member, as a full, but short *Compendium* of our Religion. And yet under these high Advantages of Credibility, we see what Opposition it met with, both from Ancients and Moderns; of the first Sort of which, we have *Arius* with his infamous Crew leading the Van, by questioning the Text itself, as if not originally Extant in some two or three ancient Copies of this Epistle; and, of the latter Sort, are those innumerable Sects and Sectaries sprung up since; some of them openly denying, and some of them (whose Learning (one would have thought) might have been better employed) slyly undermining this Grand Fundamental; and while they seemingly acknowledge

knowledge the Truth, as it lies in the bare Words of the *Text*, treacherously giving it up in the *Explication*.

As for the *Socinians*, who hold with the *Arians*, so far as they oppose us, though not in all which the *Arians* assert themselves, they have a double Refuge. And first with them *pretending* the Doubtfulness of the Text, they would further evade it by a new Interpretation of *its Sense*, affirming, That this Expression [*these Three are One*] does not of Necessity import an *Unity of Nature*, but *only of Consent*. The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost being therefore said to *be One*, because they jointly and indivisibly carry on one and the same Design; all of them jointly concurring in the great Work of Man's Salvation.

Thus say they; but if this were indeed so, and if no more than *Matter of Consent* were here intended, where then (in God's Name) would be the *Mystery*, which the Universal Christian Church have all along acknowledged to be contained in these Words? For that the *Father*, the *Word*, and the Holy *Spirit* should thus jointly concur in, and carry on the grand Business of saving Mankind, is a Doctrine expressing in it nothing myste-

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myſterious, unaccountable, or ſurpaſſing Man's Underſtanding at all.

But further, if *Unity of Conſent* only were here intended, why in all Reaſon was it expreſſed by ἕν εἰσι, that is, they are one *Thing*, *Being*, or *Nature*, and not rather by εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσι, *they agree in One*; as in the very next Verſe to this, ſuch an *Unity of Concurrence* in the *Spirit*, the *Water*, and the *Blood*, is expreſſed by the ſame Words εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσι, manifeſtly importing no Identity, or Unity of *Nature*, or *Being*, but only of *Agreement* in ſome certain Reſpect or other; and doubtleſs, in ſo very near a Neighbourhood and Conjunction of Words, had the Senſe been perfectly the ſame, there can be no imaginable Reaſon given, why the Apoſtle ſhould in the very ſame Caſe thus have varyed the Expreſſion.

But, for yet a further Aſſertion of the great Truth now inſiſted upon, this Text out of the Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians* will as effectually evince the ſame, as the Place beforementioned; though perhaps not quite ſo plainly, nor wholly in the ſame Way; that is to ſay, it will do it by *ſolid Inference, and juſt Conſequence from the Words*, though not expreſly in the very Words themſelves. And accord-

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accordingly we may consider those Words, Εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, two different Ways, *viz.*

1*st.* As the Term τοῦ Θεοῦ may be taken *personally*, as in Scripture sometimes it is, and then it will here signify the *Holy Ghost*, the *Third Person* of the Blessed Trinity, tho' not indeed mentioned in this Place, in the *same Order*, in which the Three Persons commonly use to be; but the Order, I conceive, may sometime be less observed, without any Change in, or Detriment to the *Article itself*. And so this Text out of the Epistle to the *Colossians* will point out to us the Doctrine of the ever Blessed Trinity, as well as that fore-alledged *Place*, *out of St. John*, did. But,

2*dly.* If the Word τοῦ Θεοῦ be here taken *essentially*, and for the *Divine Nature* only; then the Particle καὶ will import here properly a Distribution of τοῦ Θεοῦ (signifying the *Divine Nature*) as a Term common to those two, τοῦ Πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, as to two particular *Persons*, distinguished by their respective Properties. And so taken, it must be confessed, that the Term τοῦ Θεοῦ here, will not signify the *Person of the Holy Ghost*. But granting all this, Are there not, however,

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ever, *Two other Persons* in the Divine Nature manifestly signifyed thereby? Forasmuch as the Godhead, here imported by τῦ Θεῦ, is expresly applyed both to the *Father*, and the *Son*, in those Words τῦ μυςηρίυ τῦ Θεῦ, καὶ Πατρὸς, καὶ τῦ Χριςῦ. And that, I am sure, (should it reach no further) is a full and irrefragable Confutation of the *Socinians*, the grand and chief Opposers of the Doctrine now insisted upon. For these Men deny not a *Plurality* of Persons in the Godhead from any Allegation, or Pretence of some peculiar Repugnancy of the *Number of Three* to the same, more than of any *other Number*; but because they absolutely deny, that there can be any more Persons in the Godhead, *than only One*. And consequently, that a *Duality*, or *Binary* Number of Persons in it, would, in a *Socinian*'s Account, pass for no less an Absurdity, than even a *Trinity* itself; the grand Article controverted between us and them.

The Words therefore being thus examined and explained, I shall draw forth the Sense of them into this one Proposition, *viz.*

That a Plurality of Persons, or Personal Subsistences in the Divine Nature, is a great Mystery, and so to be acknowledged by all who

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who really are, and profess themselves Christians.

The Discussion of which shall lie in these two Things.

1*st*, In shewing, What *Conditions* are required to denominate a Thing properly a *Mystery*. And

2*dly*, In shewing, That all *these Conditions* meet in the Article of the Blessed *Trinity*.

And first for the first of these. The *Conditions* required to constitute and denominate a Thing properly a Mystery, are these Three.

1. That the Thing so denominated, be in itself really true, and not contrary to Reason.

2. That it be a Thing above the Power and Reach of meer Reason to find it out, before it be revealed. And

3. That being revealed, it be yet very difficult for, if not above finite Reason fully to understand and comprehend it. And here,

1. For the first of these Conditions; A Mystery must be a Thing *really true*, and *by no means contrary to Reason*. Where let me lay down this Rule or Maxim, as the Ground-Work of all that is to follow, to wit, That *as nothing can be an Article of Faith, that is not*

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not true, ſo neither can any Thing be *true*, *that is irrational.* Some indeed lay this as their Foundation, *that Men in Matters of Religion are to deny and renounce their Reaſon*; but if ſo, then let any one declare, why I am bound to embrace the *Chriſtian Religion*, rather than that of *Mahomet*, or of any other *Impoſtor*; and, I ſuppoſe, you will in the firſt place tell me, becauſe the Chriſtian Religion *was revealed and atteſted by God*; whereas others, oppoſing it, were not ſo. To which I anſwer firſt, That this very Thing, *that it was thus atteſted by God*, is the greateſt Reaſon for our believing it true in the World; and as convincing, as any Demonſtration in the *Mathematicks*; it being founded upon the eſſential, unfailing Veracity of God, who can neither *deceive*, nor *be deceived.* But, then further, in the ſecond place, I ask, how I ſhall come to know, that this is *revealed by God?* Now here, if you will prove this to me, (it being *Matter of Fact*) you muſt have recourſe to all thoſe Grounds, upon which Reaſon uſes to *believe Matters of Fact, when paſt*; and accordingly ſhew me, how that all theſe are to be found for the Divine Revelation of the Chriſtian Religion, and not of any other pretending to oppoſe or contradict

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contradict it. And this, I am sure, is solid and true Arguing in the Case before us; and being so, what can it amount to less, than a just Demonstration of the Thing here intended to be proved? I say, a Demonstration proceeding upon Principles of *Moral Certainty*; a Certainty full and sufficient, and such, as being denied, must infallibly draw after it as great an Absurdity in reference *to Practice*, as the Denial of *any first Principle can do* in *point of Speculation*. As for instance, I look upon the unanimous Testimony of a competent Number of sincere, disinterested Eye or Ear-Witnesses; and, which is more, (in the present Case inspired too) all affirming the same Thing to be a Ground *morally certain*, *why we should believe that Thing*; forasmuch as the *Denial of its Certainty*, would, amongst many other Absurdities, run us upon this great one, that we can have no *Assurance*, or *certain Knowledge* of any Thing, but what we ourselves have personally seen, heard, or observed with our own Senses; which Assertion, if stuck to, would be as absurd and inconvenient in the Transactions of *Common Life*, as to deny, that two and two make four *in Arithmetick*. And in good Earnest it will be very

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very hard (if possible) to assign any other sufficient Reason, why our Saviour in *Mar.* xvi. 14. upbraided some with their *Unbelief*, as unexcusable, only for *not believing those who had seen him after he was risen.*

In short, the ultimate Object of Faith is Divine Revelation, that is, I believe such a Thing to *be true*, because it is revealed by God; but then my Reason must prove to me, that it is revealed; so that, this Way, Reason is that, into which all Religion is at last resolved.

And let me add a little further, That *no one Truth can possibly contradict another Truth*; for if *two Truths might contradict*, then *two Contradictions might be true.* And therefore, if it be *true in Christian Religion, that one Nature may subsist in three Persons*, the same cannot be false in *Reason.* Thus much, I confess, that take the Thing abstract from Divine Revelation, there is nothing in Reason able to prove that there is such a Thing; but then, this also is as true, that there is nothing in Reason able to *disprove it*, and to evince it to be *impossible.*

But you will say, That for the same Thing to be Three, and One, is a Contradiction, and therefore Reason cannot but conclude it impossible.

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impossible. I answer, that for a Thing to be One in that very Respect, in which it is Three, is a Contradiction; but to assert that that which is *One* in this Respect, may be *Three* in another, is no Contradiction.

But you will reply, That the single Nature of any Person is uncommunicable to another, as the Essence of *Peter* is circumscribed within the Person of *Peter*, and so cannot be communicated to *Paul*.

In Answer to this, let it be here observed, that this is the constant Fallacy that runs through all the Arguments of the *Socinians* in this Dispute; and all that they urge against a triple Subsistence of the Divine Nature, is still from Instances taken from *created Natures*, and applyed to the Divine; and because they see this impossible, or, at least never exemplifyed in Them, they conclude hence, that it must be so also in This.

But this is a gross and apparent Error in Argumentation; it being a meer Transition *à Genere ad Genus*, which is to conclude the same Thing of different Kinds; and because this holds true in Things of this Nature, to conclude hence, that therefore the same must be true also in Things that are

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of a clean different Nature; which is a manifeſt Paralogiſm.

To all theſe Arguments therefore, I oppoſe this one (I think) not irrational Conſideration: That it is a Thing very agreeable even to the Notions of bare Reaſon, to imagine, *that the Divine Nature has a Way of ſubſiſting very different from the Subſiſtence of any Created Being.* For inaſmuch as *Nature* and *Subſiſtence* go to the making up of a *Perſon*, why may not the Way of their Subſiſtence be quite as different as their Natures are confeſſed to be? One Nature being infinite, the other finite? And therefore, though it be neceſſary in *Things created* (as no one Inſtance appears to the contrary) for *one ſingle Eſſence* to ſubſiſt *in one ſingle Perſon, and no more*; does this at all prove, that the ſame muſt be alſo *neceſſary in God*, whoſe Nature is wholly different from theirs, and conſequently may differ as much in the Manner *of his Subſiſtence*, and ſo may have One and the *ſame Nature* diffuſed into Three diſtinct Perſons? This one Conſideration (I ſay) well weighed and applyed, will retund the *Edge* and *Dint* of all the *Socinian* Aſſaults againſt this great Article. Whom I have ſtill obſerved to aſſert boldly, when they conclude

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conclude weakly; and in all their Arguments to prove nothing more than this, That the greatest Pretenders to, are not always the greatest Masters of *Reason*.

But here, before I dismiss this Particular, I shall observe this, That for a Man to prove a Thing clearly, is to bring it by certain and apparent Consequence, from some Principle in itself known and evident, and granted by all. Otherwise it would not be a Demonstration, but an infinite Progress.

Now this being supposed: In case any one shall so disprove the Trinity, as to show, that it really contradicts some such Principle of Reason evident in itself, and universally granted by the unprejudiced Apprehensions of Mankind; I should not be afraid to expunge this Article out of my Creed, and to discharge any Man living from a Necessity of believing it. For God cannot enjoin any Thing absurd or impossible; but for any Man to assent to two contradictory Propositions, as true, while he perceives them to be contradictory, is the First-born of Impossibilities.

Reason therefore is undeservedly and ignorantly traduced, when it is set up and shot at, as the irreconcilable Enemy of Re-

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ligion. It is indeed the very Crown and Privilege of our Nature; a Ray of Divinity ſent into a mortal Body: The *Star that guides all wiſe Men to Chriſt:* The Lanthorn that leads the Eye of Faith, and is no more an Enemy to it, than an obedient Hand-Maid to a diſcreet Miſtreſs. Thoſe indeed, whoſe Tenets will not bear the Teſt of it, and whoſe Ware goes off beſt in the dark Rooms of Ignorance and Credulity, and whoſe *Faith* has as much Cauſe *to dread a Diſcovery as their Works*; theſe (I ſay) may decry Reaſon; and that indeed not without Reaſon.

For ask ſuch, upon what Grounds they believe the Truth of Chriſtian Religion, whereas others ſo much oppoſe it: And here, inſtead of rational Inducements, and ſolid Arguments, we ſhall have long Harangues of the *Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt*, of *rolling upon the Promiſes*, of the *Spirit of Aſſurance*, and the *Preciouſneſs of Goſpel-Diſpenſations*, with many other ſuch-like Words, as ſhow that they have followed their own Advice to others, and wholly renounced their Reaſon themſelves.

But I cannot think or perſuade myſelf, that God gave us Eyes, only that we may pluck

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pluck them out, and brought us into the World with Reason, that being born Men, we might afterwards grow up and improve into Brutes, and become elaborately Irrational. No surely; Reason is both the Gift and Image of God, and every Degree of its Improvement is a further Degree of Likeness to him. And though I cannot judge it a fit Saying for a dying Christian to make, that Wish of *Averroes*, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis*; yet while he lives, I think no Christian ought to be ashamed to wish, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophiâ*. And for all these Boastings of new *Lights*, *Inbeamings*, and *Inspirations*; that Man that follows his Reason, both in the Choice and Defence of his Religion, will find himself better led and directed by this one Guide, than by an hundred *Directories*. And thus much *for the first Condition*.

2. The second Condition required to denominate a Thing properly a Mystery, is, *That it be above the Reach of Reason to find it out, and that it be first knowable only by Revelation*. This, I suppose, I shall not be called upon to prove, it being a Thing clear in itself.

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But we have been told by ſome, that there are ſome Hints and Traces of the Article of the Trinity to be found in ſome Heathen Writers, as *Triſmegiſtus* and *Plato*, who are ſaid to make Mention of it. To which I anſwer firſt, That if there do occur ſuch Hints of a Trinity in ſuch Writers, yet it follows not hence, that they owed them to the Invention of their own Reaſon, but received them from others by Tradition, who themſelves firſt had them from Revelation. But ſecondly, to the Caſe in hand, I anſwer more fully, that it cannot be denied, but that ſome Chriſtians have endeavoured to defend the Truth imprudently and unwarrantably, by bad Arts, and Falſifying of ancient Writers: And that ſuch Places as ſpeak of the Trinity, are ſpurious, or at leaſt ſuſpicious. As the whole Book, that now goes under the Name of *Triſmegiſtus*, called his *Pæmander*, may juſtly be ſuppoſed to be.

But that we may a little aid and help out our Apprehenſions in conceiving of this great Myſtery, let us endeavour to ſee, whether upon the Grounds and Notions of Reaſon, we can frame to ourſelves any Thing, that may carry in it ſome Shadow and Reſemblance

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blance at least of one single, undivided Nature's casting itself into three Subsistences, without receding from its own Unity. And for this Purpose, we may represent to ourselves an infinite Rational Mind, which, considered under the first and original Perfection of *Being* or *Existence*, may be called the *Father*; inasmuch as the Perfection of Existence is the First and Productive of all others. Secondly, in the same infinite Mind may be considered the Perfection of Understanding, as being the first great Perfection that issues from the Perfection of Existence, and so may be called the *Son*, who also is called ὁ Λόγος, the *Word*, as being the first Emanation of that infinite Mind. And then thirdly, when that infinite Mind, by its *Understanding*, reflects upon its *own Essential Perfections*, there cannot but ensue *an Act of Volition* and *Complacency in those Perfections* arising from such an Intellectual Reflection upon them, which may be called the *Holy Ghost*, who therefore is said to proceed both from the *Father* and the *Son*, because there must be not only Existence, but also Understanding, before there can be Love and Volition. Here then, we see, that one and the same Mind is both *Being*, *Understanding*,

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and *Willing*, and yet we can neither ſay, that Being is Underſtanding, nor that Underſtanding is Willing; nor on the contrary, that Underſtanding is meerly Being, nor that Willing is Underſtanding. Foraſmuch as the proper Natural Conception of one, is not the Conception of the other, nor yet commenſurate to it. And this I propoſe, neither as *a full Explication*, nor, much leſs, as a *juſt Repreſentation* of this great Myſtery; but only (as I intimated before, and intend no more now) as ſome remote and feint Reſemblance, or Adumbration thereof: For ſtill this is, and muſt be acknowledged, unconceivably above the Reach and Ken of any Humane Intellect; and as a Depth, in which the talleſt Reaſon may ſwim, and, if it ventures too far, may chance to be ſwallowed up too.

Nay, I think, that it was a Thing not only locked up from the Reſearches of Reaſon, amongſt thoſe that were led only by Reaſon, I mean the *Gentiles*, but that it was alſo concealed from, or at beſt but obſcurely known by the *Jewiſh* Church. And *Peter Galatine* aſſigns a Reaſon, why God was not pleaſed to give the *Jews* any expreſs Revelation of this Myſtery; namely, that People's great

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great Stupidity and Grossness of Apprehension, together with their exceeding Proneness to Idolatry; by reason of the former of which, they would have been apt to entertain very uncouth and mistaken Conceptions of the Godhead and the Three Persons, as if they had been three distinct Gods; and thereupon to have been easily induced to an Idolatrous Worship and Opinion of them; and therefore, that the Unfolding of this Mystery was reserved till the Days of the *Messias*, by which Time the World should, by a long Increase of Knowledge, grow more and more refined and prepared for the Reception of this so sublime and mysterious an Article.

This was his Reason for God's concealing it from the *Jews*; for that God did so, the Old Testament, which is the great Ark and Repository of the *Jewish* Religion, seems sufficiently to declare: There being no Text in it, that plainly and expressly holds forth a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. Several Texts are indeed urged for that Purpose, though (whatever they may allude to) they seem not yet to be of that Force and Evidence, as to inferr what some undertake to prove by them. Such as are

1. Those

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1. Thoſe Words in the firſt of *Geneſis*, *Bara Elohim*. Where *Elohim* ſignifying God, and being of the Plural Number, is joined with *Bara*, *creavit*, a Verb of the Singular. Whence ſome collect, that the former Word imports a Plurality of Perſons, and the latter an Unity of Eſſence. But others deny, that any ſuch peculiar Meaning ought or can be gathered from that, which is indeed no more than an Idiom and Propriety of the *Hebrew* Language. So that *Elohim* applyed to others beſides God, is often joined with a Singular Number.

2. Another Place alledged for the ſame Purpoſe, is, that in *Gen.* i. 26. *Let us make Man in our own Image*, where, they ſay, that there is a Conſultation amongſt many Perſons in the Godhead. But to this alſo it is anſwered, that the Term *Let us make*, does not of Neceſſity imply any *Plurality*, but may import only the *Majeſty* of the Speaker: Kings and Princes being accuſtomed to ſpeak of themſelves in the *Plural Number*. As *we will*, and *require you*, and it is *our Royal Will* and *Pleaſure*. This is the common Dialect of Kings, and yet it inferrs in the Speaker no Plurality; for then ſurely a King would ſpeak very unlike a Monarch.

3. There

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3. There is a third Place also, in *Isa.* vi. 3. where the threefold Repetition of *Holy, Holy, Holy*, applyed to God, is urged by some to relate distinctly to the three Hypostases of the Godhead. But this is thought by others to have so little of an Argument in it, as scarce to merit any Answer. It being so usual with all Nations and Languages to express any Thing *vehement* or *extraordinary*, by thrice repeating the Word used by them; suitable to which, are those Expressions that occurr in Classick Authors, as *Tergeminis tollit honoribus*, and *ô ter felices*, and *illi robur & æs triplex circa pectus erat*, with infinite the like Instances; in all which, the Manner of Speaking serves only to express the Greatness of the Thing spoke of. So that these, and such-like Places of Scripture carry not in them any such evident Proof of the Trinity, as to persuade us, that the *Jewish* Church could from hence arrive to any clear Knowledge of this Article. The forementioned *Galatine* indeed affirms the *Talmudists* to speak several Things concerning it very plainly; and from hence concludes, that in regard the *Talmud* is a Collection of the several Sayings and Writings of the old *Jewish* Doctors upon the Old Testament, it must import, that since they

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they wrote such Things of the *Trinity*, and the *Messias*, there was then a Knowledge of these Things in the *Jewish* Church. But I fear the Authority of those *Talmudical* Writings will weigh so little in this Case, that if the Letter of the Scripture will not otherwise speak a Trinity, but as it is helped out, and expounded by the *Talmud*, few sober Persons will seek for it there. The only solid Proof, that makes towards the Eviction of a Trinity from thence, I conceive to lie in those Texts, that prove the Divine Nature of the *Messias*, whose Coming was then expected by all the *Jews*. Otherwise surely, the Knowledge of this Article could but very obscurely be gathered from the bare Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, and consequently was by no means received with that Explicitness in the ancient *Jewish* Church, that it is now in the Christian.

As for the Opinion of the Modern *Jews* touching this Matter, we shall find, that these acknowledge no such Thing as a *Trinity*, but utterly reject and explode it. And as for the *Mahumetan* Religion, (which being a Gallamaufry made up of many, partakes much of the *Jewish*) that also wholly denies it. And the Professors of it, in all their Publick Perfor-

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Performances of Religious Worship, with much Zeal and Earnestness frequently reiterate and repeat this Article; *There is but one God, there is but one God*; not so much out of Zeal to assert the *Unity of the Godhead*, as to exclude the *Trinity of Persons* maintained by the Christians.

I conclude therefore, that it is very probable, that the Discovery of this Mystery was a Privilege reserved to bless the Times of Christianity withall, and that the *Jews* had either none, or but a very weak and confused Knowledge of it. It was the great *Arcanum* for the Receiving of which the World was to be many Ages in preparing. As long as the *Veil of the Temple* remained, it was a *Secret*, not to be looked into; an *Holy of Holies*, into which even the High Priest himself did not enter. And thus much for the second Condition required to make or constitute a Mystery; namely, that it be above the Strength *of bare Reason to find it out*, before it is revealed.

3. The third and last is this: *That after it is revealed, it be yet difficult to be understood.* And he, who thinks the contrary, let him make Trial. For although there is nothing in Reason to *contradict*, yet neither

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is there any Thing to *comprehend* it. We may as well ſhut a Mountain within a Mole-Hill, or take up the Ocean in a Cockle-Shell, as reach the ſtupendous Sacred Intricacies of the Divine Subſiſtence, by the ſhort and feeble Notions of a Created Apprehenſion.

Reaſon indeed proves the *Revelation* of it by God; but then having done this, here it ſtops, and pretends not to underſtand and fathom the Nature of the Thing *revealed.*

If any one ſhould plead a Parity of the Caſe, as to this Article of the *Trinity*, and that about *Tranſubſtantiation*; and alledge, that ſince we deny not a *Trinity*, though we underſtand it not, but account it a Myſtery, and ſo believe it, why may we not take *Tranſubſtantiation* alſo into the Number of Myſteries, and believe it, though it be intricate and impoſſible to be underſtood?

To this I anſwer. 1*ſt*, In general, That no Man diſcourſing, or proceeding rationally upon this Subject, refuſes to believe *Tranſubſtantiation* meerly upon this Account, that it is *impoſſible to be underſtood.* 2*dly*, I affirm, that the Caſe between *Tranſubſtantiation* and the *Trinity* is very different. The former being contradicted by the Judgment of that Faculty, of which it is properly the Object; the

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the latter being not at all *contradicted*, but only *not comprehended* by the Faculty, to which the Judgment and Cognizance of it does belong. To make which clear, we must observe, that both the Bread and the Body of Christ, about which Transubstantiation is said to be effected, being endued with *Quantity*, *Colour*, and the like, are the *proper Objects* of *Sense*, and so fall under the Cognizance of the *Sight* and *Touch*; which Senses being entire, and acting as naturally they ought, they both can and do certainly judge of their *proper Objects*, and upon such Judgment find it to be a Contradiction for a small Body retaining its own proper Dimensions, at the same Time to have the Dimensions of a Body forty Times greater. For one Body to be circumscribed, and so compassed in one Place, and at the same Time to fill a Thousand more, I say it is a Contradiction; for it makes the same Thing in the very same Respect to be *circumscribed*, and *not to be circumscribed*; circumscribed, because encompassed in such a Place; and yet not circumscribed, because extending itself beyond that Place to many others.

But now, on the other side, the *Divine Nature* and the *Trinity* are not the *Objects* of

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of Senſe, and conſequently Senſe paſſes no Judgment upon them. But they are the Objects *of* (and ſo only tryable *by*) the *Mind*, and the *Underſtanding*; taking in theſe Things from the *Reports not of Senſe*, but *Revelation*. Which Supream Faculty, being thus informed by *Revelation*, tendring theſe Reports to its Apprehenſion, and withall finding, that none of thoſe Rules or Principles, by which it judges of the Truth or Falſity of what it apprehends, do at all contradict what Revelation thus ſpeaks and reports of the *Divine Nature and the Trinity*, it rationally judges, that they may, and ought to be aſſented to.

For the Streſs of the Point lies here, and let all the Reaſon of Mankind prove, if it can, *That whereſoever the Denomination of Three is aſcribed* to any Nature, it muſt of Neceſſity multiply the *Nature itſelf, and not only its Relations*. Which being ſo; thoſe that make the Article of the *Trinity* Parallel to that of *Tranſubſtantiation*, in point of its Contrariety to Reaſon; if they will ſpeak and argue to the Purpoſe, muſt undertake to prove, That for *One* infinite *Being or Nature* to be in any Reſpect, or upon any Account whatſoever, Three, without a *Triplication* of that

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that Nature, and so a Loss of its Unity, is as contrary and repugnant to some known Principle of Reason discoursing upon the Reports of Revelation; as for that Thing, which all my Senses tell me to be a little Piece of Bread, to be yet both for Figure and Dimension really a Man's Body, is contradictory to all those Principles, by which Sense judges of those Things, that properly fall under the Judgment of Sense.

Let this, I say, be clearly and conclusively made out, and the Business is done. But till then, they must give us Leave to judge, that there is as much Difference between the Article of the *Trinity as stated by us, and that of Transubstantiation as stated by them*, as there is between *Difficulty* and *Contradiction.*

And now, if there be any, whose Reason is so unruly and over-curious, as to be still inquisitive and unsatisfied, such must remember, that when we have made the utmost Explications of this Article, we pretend not thereby, *to have altered the Nature of the Subject we have been treating of*; which, after all, is *still a Mystery*; and they must know moreover, that when the sacred Mysteries of Religion are discoursed of, the Business of a

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Christian is Sobriety and Submission, and his Duty to be *satisfied*, even though he were not *convinced*. The Trinity is a fundamental Article of the Christian Religion; and as he that denies it, may lose *his Soul*; so he that too much strives to understand it, may lose *his Wits*. Knowledge is nice, intricate, and tedious, but Faith is easy; and what is more, it is safe. And why should I then unhinge my Brains, ruin my Mind, and pursue Distraction in the Disquisition of that which a little Study would sufficiently convince me to be not intelligible? Or why should I by chewing a Pill make it useless, which swallowed whole might be Curing and Restaurative? A Christian, in these Matters, has nothing to do but to believe; and since I cannot scientifically comprehend this Mystery, I shall worship it with the Religion of Submission and Wonder, and casting down my Reason before it, receive it with the Devotions of Silence, and the humble Distances of Adoration.

But here having drawn the Business so far, I cannot but take Notice of some of those blasphemous Expressions which the *Socinians* use, concerning the sacred Mystery of the Trinity; their Terms (as I have collected some out

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out of many) are such as these. " *Deus* " *Triperſonatus. Idolum Portentoſum. Fig-* " *mentum Satanæ. Antichriſti Cerberus. Tri-* " *ceps Geryon. Idolum Triſrons. Monſtrum* " *Triforme. Deus incognitus, adeoque pro-* " *cul rejiciendus, & Satanæ conditori ſuo re-* " *ſtituendus.* Now, that the Authors of these ugly Appellations shew themselves not only bold and impious, but also (what by no means they would be thought) very unreasonable, will, I think, appear from these two Considerations.

1. First, That the Doctrine so broadly decryed by them, is at least very difficult, and hardly comprehensible; and therefore, though it could not be *proved true*, yet, upon the same Score, it can as hardly *be proved false*. But now these Expressions ought to proceed not only upon the *Supposition* of its bare Falsity, but also upon the Evidence, and undeniable *Clearness of its Falsity*; or they must needs be impudent and intolerable.

He that says, that it is *clear*, that there can be no such Thing as the *Quadrature of the Circle*, makes an impudent Assertion; for, though possibly there can be really no such Thing, yet since there have been such considerable Reasons for it, as to engage the

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greateſt Wits in the Search after it, no Man can rationally ſay, that it is *clear* and *manifeſt*, that there is no ſuch Thing. But beſides, in this Caſe, they deal very irrationally in rejecting the Doctrine of the Trinity, becauſe it is *not intelligible*; when not only in Divinity, but alſo in Philoſophy (where yet, not *Faith*, but *ſtrict Ratiocination* ſhould take place) they acknowledge many Things, which the beſt Reaſon will ſcarce be able to frame an explicit Notion and Apprehenſion of. Such as are the Compoſition and Diviſion of *continued Quantities*, and the like; which theſe Men, I believe, will not deny, though it would ſet them hard to give a clear Account of them.

2. The ſame Charge of Abſurdity lies againſt theſe Men upon this Account, that they preferr their particular Reaſon, before the united Reaſon of a *much greater Number than themſelves*; every one of which, were of as great Induſtry to ſearch, and of as great Abilities to underſtand the Myſteries of Divinity, as theſe Men can be preſumed to be.

Now, as this is much beſide *good Manners*, ſo indeed it is no leſs ſhort of *good Reaſon*; which will prove thus much at leaſt; That when a few Learned Perſons deny a Propoſition,

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sition, and others *forty Times more Numerous, and altogether as Learned* do unanimously affirm it, it is very probable, that the Truth stands rather with the Majority.

For if I should demand of these Men, how they come to judge the Doctrine of the Trinity to be false? They must tell me, That they have studied the Point, considered the Text, examined it by the Principles of Reason, and that by the Use of these Means they come at length to make this Conclusion.

But to this I answer, That others who have studied the Point as much, considered the Text as exactly, and examined it by as strong Principles of Reason, as their Opposites could pretend to, and so standing upon equal Ground with them in point of *Abilities*, have much the Advantage of them in point of *Number*.

But you will say; must I therefore conclude, that what is affirmed by such a Majority of Persons so qualified, is certainly true? I answer no; but this I assert; That it is great Reason, though their Assertion appear never so *strange* to me, that I should yet *suspend my Judgment*, and not peremptorily conclude it *false*. Since there is hardly any

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Means, nor *Way* of Ratiocination used by one to prove it a *Falsity*, but by the very *same Way* and *Means* others persuade themselves, that they as strongly prove it to be a *Truth*.

And thus I think, that these Mens Exceptions against this great Article are, to such as understand Reason, sufficiently proved irrational. But since these Men reject the Doctrine of the Trinity upon Pretence both of its *Impiety* and *Absurdity*, it is but requisite, that they should acquit themselves in all their Doctrine, from holding any Thing either *impious* or *absurd*. But yet, that they cannot do so, these following Positions maintained by them, will, I believe, demonstrate.

1. To assert, as *Volkelius*, in his second Book *De Verâ Religione*, and the fourth Chapter, not obscurely does, the *Matter* of the Universe to be a *Passive Principle* eternally coexisting with God *the Active*; is impious, and not consistent with God's infinite Power; for if *Matter* has its Being from itself, it will follow, that it can preserve itself in Being against all Opposition, and consequently, that God cannot destroy it, which makes him not Omnipotent.

2. To

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2. To allow God's Power to be infinite, and yet his Substance to be *finite*, is monstrously absurd; but to assert, as *Crellius* in his Book *De Attributis Dei*, in the 27th Chapter, does, *that his Substance is circumscribed* within the Compass of the highest Heaven, is clearly to make it finite.

3. To allow all God's *Prophecies* and *Predictions* recorded in Scripture, of *future Contingent Passages*, depending upon the free Choice of Man's Will, to have been certain and infallible, and yet his *Prescience or Fore-Knowledge* of the same contingent Things not to be certain, but only conjectural, as *Socinus*, in the 8th Chapter of his *Prelections*, does affirm; is out of Measure absurd and ridiculous.

4. To affirm Christ to be a *meer Creature*, and no more, and yet to contend, that he is to be *invoked and worshipped* with *Divine Worship*; is exceedingly absurd, and contrary to all the Discourses of right Reason; and withall, as offensive and scandalous to *Jews* and *Turks*, and *such-like*, as the bare Affirmation of his Divine Nature can be pretended to be. But *Socinus*, though he denies this, yet is so earnest for the Divine *Adoration* and *Invocation* of Christ; that he

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affirms, that of the Two, it is better to be a *Trinitarian*, than not to aſcribe this to him.

5. To aſſert, that the People of God, under the *Jewiſh* OEconomy, lay under the Obligation of no *Precept to pray to God*; as *Volkelius*, in his 4th Book *De Verâ Religione*, and the 9th Chapter, poſitively affirms, is an Aſſertion highly *impious*, and to all pious Minds abominable.

6. To aſſert, that it is lawful for a Man *to tell a Lye* to ſecure himſelf from ſome great Danger or Inconvenience; as the ſame *Volkelius* in the 4th Book, and 19th Chapter, does; is ſuch a Thing, as not only conſiſts not with Piety and Sincerity, but tends to drive even *Common Honeſty* and Society out of the World.

7. To aſſert, that it is *unlawful for Chriſtians in any Caſe to wage War*, as *Socinus* himſelf does in his 2d Epiſtle to *Chriſtophorus Morſtinus*, a *Polonian* Commander, in which he allows him to bring his Army into the Field in *Terrorem Hoſtium*, provided that he neither ſtrikes a Stroke, nor draws Blood, nor cuts off a Limb. This, I ſay, is groſly abſurd and unnatural, and contrary to the eternal Principle of Self-Preſervation; as engaging

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gaging Men, even for Conscience Sake, to surrender their Lives and Fortunes to any Thief or Murderer, that shall think fit to require them. Neither can *Socinus*, in Reason, so urge those Words of our Saviour, in *Matt.* v. 39. *of not resisting Evil*, in this Case, if he will be but true to his own Principle. For in his 3d Book *De Christo Servatore*, and the 6th Chapter, disputing against Christ's Satisfaction, he pleads, *that in regard it is* (as he says) *contrary to Reason, though the Scripture should never so often affirm it, yet it ought not to be admitted or assented to.* Now, if this be his Rule, I demand of him, whether, for a Man to preserve himself, and that even with the Destruction of the Life of the Person assailing him, supposing that he cannot possibly do it otherwise, be not as undeniable a Dictate or Principle of Natural Reason as any, that he can pretend to be contradicted by Christ's *Satisfaction.* And therefore, if he can lay aside Christ's *Satisfaction*, though the Scripture were never so express for it, in regard of the Contrariety he pretends in it to Reason, why may not we, upon the same Grounds, assert the Necessity of Self-Preservation in the Instance of War, though the Scripture expresly forbids it? Since for a Man

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Man to relinquish his own Defence, is indubitably contrary to the Dictates of Nature, and consequently of Reason.

But we need not recurr to this, for the warranting Men under the Gospel to defend their Lives, though with the Destruction of those that would take them away. Only this I alledge as an *Argument ad Hominem*, which sufficiently shews, how slight and desultorious this Man is in his Principles and Way of Arguing, while at one Time he frames to himself a Principle for his present Turn, and at another makes Assertions, and raises Discourses, which that Principle most directly overthrows. Now all the forementioned Absurdities (with many more that might be reckoned) are the Tenets of those who deny the Article of the *Trinity*, because (forsooth) it is *impious* and *absurd*; that is, who strain at one *Gnat*, having already swallowed so many vast *Camels*. And yet these are the Persons, who in all their Writings have the Face to own themselves to the World for those Heroes, whom God, by his special Providence, has raised up to explain Christian Religion, and to *reform* the *Doctrine of the Church*. I suppose, just in the same Sense, that the School of *Calvin* was to reform her *Discipline*.

And

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And now in the last place. Because this Article is of so great Moment, and stands (as it were) in the very Front of our Religion; so that it is of very high Concernment to all to be sound and through-paced in the Belief of it. I shall show

1. What have been the Causes that have first unsettled, and at the last destroyed the Belief of it in some. And

2. What may be the best Means to settle and preserve the Belief of it in ourselves and others.

For the first of these. There are three Things, which I think have been the great Causes that have took some off from the Belief of this Article. As

1. That bold, prophane, and absurd Custom of some Persons, in attempting to *paint and represent it in Figure*. He who *paints God*, does a Contradiction; for he attempts to make that *visible*, which he professes to be *invisible*. The Ministers of *Transylvania* and *Sarmatia*, rank Assertors of the *Socinian* Heresy, in a certain Book (wherein they make *Confession of their Faith, as to these Articles*) insist upon nothing so much, nor indeed so plausibly, for their Rejection of the Article

See a Latin *Book in* 4to, *entituled*, Præmonitiones Christi, & Apostolorum, per ministros quosdam in Sarmatiâ & Transylvaniâ, &c.

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Article of the Trinity, as thoſe ſeveral ſtrange *Pictures*, and *Images of the Trinity*, which ſome Perſons had ſet up in ſeveral of their Churches: Sometimes deſcribing it *by one Head carved into three Faces*, to which, ſo ſet up in a certain Church, they ſubjoin this Diſtich,

Menſe Trifrons iſto Janum pater urbe Bifrontem
Expulit, ut Solus regnet in orbe Trifrons;

That is to ſay, that the *God having three Faces*, had driven, or (if you will) *outfaced poor* Janus *out of the World, who had but two.* And likewiſe elſewhere ſuch another,

Jane Biceps, anni tacitè labentis Origo;
Trifrontem pellas, ni miſer eſſe velis.

Sometimes alſo they repreſent it by a *Ring ſet with three Diamonds, in three equi-diſtant Places of it.* And ſometimes by the *Picture of three Men of an equal Pitch ſitting together at one Table, and upon one Seat.* And ſometimes the ſame is expreſſed by the *Image of an old Man, a Child, and a Dove; one ſignifying the Father, one the Son, and the third the Holy Ghoſt.* All which Things being ſo contrary to the very Natural Notions which

Reaſon

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Reason has of God, have brought many sober Parts of the World to nauseate and abhorr our whole Religion, and to reject Christianity as only a new Scheme of the old *Gentile* Idolatry: And withall, have warranted the forementioned Hereticks to think they had Cause for all those vile and wretched Appellations, with which, we shew how they bespattered this Divine Mystery; which Blasphemies will, no doubt, be one Day laid at the Door, not of those only, who *denyed*, but of those also, who *painted* the Trinity; and by so doing made others to *deny* it. And indeed, so far has the common Sort of Mankind took Offence at these Things, that if the Belief of a God were not very deeply imprinted in Man's Nature, such Mens cursed irrational Boldness, in presuming to paint him, would go very near to bring all those about them, by Degrees, to question the very Deity itself.

2. A second Cause of the same Evil, is the equally bold and insignificant Terms which some of the Schoolmen have expressed this great Article by. Who pursuing their own *Phænomena*, as undoubted Truths, speak as peremptorily and confidently of this profound Mystery, as if it were a Thing obvious

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vious to the first Apprehensions of Sense. It was a good and a pious Saying of an ancient Writer, *Periculosum est de Deo etiam vera dicere*; no wonder therefore, if these Men, discoursing of the Nature and Subsistence of God, in a Language neither warrantable nor apprehensible, have by their *Modalities*, *Suppositalities*, *Circumincessions*, and twenty such other *Chimeras*, so misrepresented this adorable Article of the Trinity to Mens Reason, as to bring them first to loath, and at length to deny it.

3. A third Cause, which has much weakned some Mens Belief of this Article, has been the imprudent Building it upon some Texts of Scripture, which indeed will evince no such Thing. *Such* as those Places which I mentioned out of the Old Testament. And *such*, as one of the Ancients once brought for a Proof of the eternal Generation, and Deity of the *Word*, from that Expression of *David*, in *Psal.* xliv. 1. *Quisquamne dubitat* (says he) *de Divinitate Filii, cum legerit illud Psalmistæ, Cor meum eructavit verbum bonum?* Concerning which, and the like Allegations, I shall only make one very obvious, but as true (and perhaps too true) a Remark, that whatsoever is produced and insisted upon in behalf

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half of any great and momentous Point of Religion, if it comes not fully close and home to the same, it is always found much more effectual to expose the *Truth* it is brought for, than to support it, and to *confirm* the *Heretick* it is brought against, than to *convince* him.

And thus having shewn some of the Causes that undermine Mens Belief of the Article of the Trinity; I shall now assign some Means also, to fix and continue it in such Minds, as do already embrace it. And these shall be briefly Two.

1. To acquiesce in the bare Revelation of the Thing itself; and in those Expressions, under which it is revealed. As for the Thing itself, God has expresly said, That there are *Three* above the Rank of Created Beings, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*. And as for the Words, in which he has conveyed this to us, they are few, easy, and intelligible, and to be believed just as they are proposed; that is, simply, and in general, and without entring too far into Particulars.

2. To suppress all nice, and over-curious Enquiries into the peculiar Nature, Reason, and Manner of this Mystery. For God having

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having not thought fit to reveal this to us any further, than he has yet actually done, sufficiently declares it to have been his Intent, that it should indeed be no further known, nor indeed searched into by us; and perhaps so far as it is yet unknown, it may, to a Created Reason, be also *unknowable.* For when we are once assured, that the Thing itself *is*; for us to amuse ourselves, and others, with bold perplexing Questions, (as they can be no better) *how*, and *which Way* it comes to be so? especially in Matters relating to Almighty God, must needs be equally Irreverent, and Impertinent. Those Words of an ancient Commentator upon St. *John*, contain in them an excellent Rule, and always to be attended to, *Firmam fidem* (says he) *Mysterio adhibentes, nunquam, in tam sublimibus, illud quomodò aut cogitemus, aut proferamus.* Which Rule had it been well observed, both in this, and some other Articles of our Religion; not only the Peace of particular Churches and Consciences, but also the General Peace of *Christendom* might, in great Measure, have been happily preserved by it.

Let this therefore be fixed upon, that there is no *Obedience* comparable to that of the Understand-

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derstanding; no Temperance, which so much commends the Soul to God, as that which shews itself in the Restraint of our *Curiosity*. Besides which two important Considerations, let us consider also, that an over anxious Scrutiny into such Mysteries, is utterly useless, as to all Purposes of a rational Enquiry. It *wearies* the Mind, but not *informs* the *Judgment*. It makes us conceited, and fantastical in our Notions, instead of being sober and wise to Salvation. It may provoke God also, by our pressing too much into the Secrets of Heaven, and the concealed Glories of his Nature, to desert and give us over to strange Delusions. For they are only *Things revealed*, (as *Moses* told the *Israelites*, in *Deut.* xxix. 29.) *which belong to the Sons of Men* to understand and look into, as the sole and proper Privilege allowed them by God, to exercise their noblest Thoughts upon; but as for such high Mysteries as the Trinity, as the Subsistence *of one Nature in three Persons*, and of three Persons in one and the same individual *Nature*, these are to be reckoned in the Number of such sacred and *secret Things*, as belong to God alone perfectly to know, but

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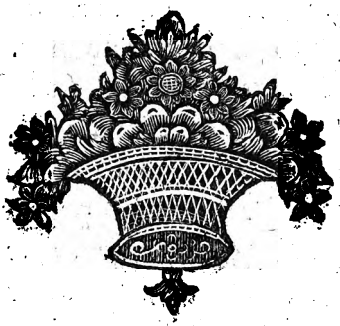
to ſuch poor Mortals as we are, humbly to *fall down before*, and *adore*.

To which God, incomprehenſible in his Nature, and wonderful in his Works, be rendred and aſcribed (as is moſt due) all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.



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Ill-diſpoſed *Affections*, both naturally and penally the Cauſe of Darkneſs and Error in the *Judgment*.

IN TWO

DISCOURSES

UPON

2 *THESS.* ii. 11.

PART I.

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2 Thess. ii. 11.

And for this Cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye.

OF all the fatal Effects of Sin, none looks so dreadfully, none strikes so just an Horror into considering Minds, as that every sinful Action a Man does, naturally disposes him to another; and that it is hardly possible for him to do any Thing so ill, but that it proves a *Preparative* and *Introduction* to the Doing of something *worse*. Upon which Account, that notable Imprecation of the *Psalmist*, upon his own and the Church's Enemies, in *Psal.* lxix. 28. namely, *That they may fall from one Wickedness to another*, is absolutely the bittereſt and most severe of any extant in the whole Book of

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God, as being indeed the very Abridgment of that grand Repository of Curses, the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*; and that with the Addition of something besides, and of so much a more killing Malignity, than all of them put together; by how much the Evil of *Sin* is confessedly greater, than the Evil of any *Suffering for it* whatsoever. The like Instances to which, we have in the Text now before us, of a Sort of Men, first casting off the *Love of the Truth*, and from thence passing into a *State of Delusion*; and lastly, settling in a steddy, fixed *Belief of a Lye*. By such wretched Gradations is it, that Sin commonly arrives at its full ἀκμὴ, or Maturity. So that in Truth, it is the only *Perpetual Motion* which has yet been found out, and needs nothing but a *Beginning* to keep it incessantly *Going on*. Accordingly, as every immoral Act in the immediate and direct Tendency of it, is certainly a *Step downwards*, and a very large one too; so in all Motions of *Descent*, it is seldom or never found, that a Thing so moving makes any Stop in its Fall, till it is fallen so far, that it is past falling any further. And much the same is the Case with a Man, as to his *Spirituals*; after he has been

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been long engaged in a Courſe of Sinning, his Progreſs in it grows infinite, and his Return *deſperate.*

Now in the Words I have here pitched upon, as they ſtand in Coherence with the precedent and ſubſequent Verſe, there are theſe two Things to be conſidered.

Firſt, A ſevere Judgment denounced againſt a certain Sort of Men; namely, *That God would ſend them ſuch ſtrong Deluſion, that they ſhould believe a Lye.* And

Secondly, The meritorious Procuring Cauſe of this Judgment in the foregoing Verſe; to wit, *Their not receiving the Love of the Truth.*

Where it is manifeſt, that by the Words *Truth, and a Lye*, are not to be here meant, all *Truth* and *Falſhood generally* or *indefinitely* ſpeaking, nor yet more particularly all that is *true* or *falſe* upon a philoſophical Account. For theſe Truths or Falſhoods the Apoſtle does not in this Place concern himſelf about: But ſuch only as belong properly to Religion, with reference to the Worſhip of

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Almighty God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls. In a word, by *Truth* here, is meant nothing else but the Gospel, or Doctrine of Christianity; nothing being more frequent with the inspired Penmen of Holy Writ, than to express the Christian Religion by the Name of *Truth*; and that sometimes absolutely, and without any Epithet or Addition, and sometimes with some additional Term of Specification; as in *Tit.* i. 1. it is called, *The Truth according to Godliness*; and in *Ephes.* iv. 15. *The Truth as it is in Jesus*, with the like in several other Places. So that still the great ennobling *Characteristick* of the Gospel, is *Truth*; *Truth* eminently and transcendently *such*; and for that Cause, by a distinguishing Excellency, called *the Truth*; from whence, by irrefragable Consequence, it must also follow, *That whatsoever is not Truth, can be no Part of Christian Religion.* A Bottom so firm and sure for Christianity to rest upon, that it cannot be placed upon a surer and more unshakable; besides this further Advantage accruing to it thereby, that as *Truth* and *Goodness* by an eternal, indissoluble Union (as strong as Nature, or rather as the God of Nature can make it)

stand

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ſtand eſſentially and inſeparably combined, and even identified with one another; ſo, upon the ſame Account, we may be aſſured, that the *Goodneſs* of the Goſpel cannot but adequately match and keep pace with the *Truth* of it. Both of them being perfectly commenſurate, both of them equally Properties of it, equally included in, and flowing from its very Conſtitution. So that the Goſpel being thus held forth to the World, as the livelieſt Repreſentation, and fulleſt Tranſcript of thoſe two glorious Perfections of the Divine Nature, to wit, *its Truth and Goodneſs*; it muſt needs, by the firſt of them, recommend itſelf to our Underſtandings, as the moſt commanding Object of our *Eſteem*, and by the other to our *Wills*, as the moſt endearing Object of our *Choice*.

Which being thus premiſed, if we would bring the entire Senſe of the Words into one Propoſition, it may, I conceive, not unfitly be comprehended in this, *viz.*

That the not entertaining a ſincere Love and Affection for the Duties of Religion, does both naturally, and by the juſt Judgment of God beſides, diſpoſe Men to Errors and Deceptions about the great Truths of Religion.

This,

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This, I ſay, ſeems to me to take in the *main*, if not *whole* Deſign of the Words; for the better Proſecution of which, I ſhall caſt what I have to ſay upon them, under theſe following Particulars. As

1*ſt*, I ſhall ſhew, How the Mind of Man *can believe a Lye.*

2*dly*, I ſhall ſhew, What it is *to receive the Love of the Truth.*

3*dly*, I ſhall ſhew, How the *not receiving the Love of the Truth* comes to have ſuch an Influence upon the Underſtanding or *Judgment*, as to diſpoſe it to *Error and Deluſion.*

4*thly*, I ſhall ſhew, How God can be properly ſaid *to ſend ſuch Deluſions.*

5*thly*, Since his ſending them, is here mentioned as a *Judgment*, (and that a very great one too) I ſhall ſhew, Wherein *the Greatneſs of it conſiſts.* And

6*thly* and *Laſtly*, I ſhall improve the Point into ſome uſeful Conſequences and Deductions from the Whole.

Of each of which in their Order. And

1. For the firſt of them. *To ſhew, how the Mind of Man can believe a Lye.* There is certainly ſo great a Suitableneſs between Truth,

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Truth, and an humane Underſtanding, that the Underſtanding of itſelf can no more believe a Lye, than the Taſte rightly diſpoſed can pronounce a bitter Thing ſweet. The formal Cauſe of all Aſſent, is the *Appearance of Truth*; and if a Lye is believed, it can be ſo no further, than as it carries in it the *Appearance* of *Truth*. But then, what, and whence are theſe *Appearances? Appearance*, no doubt, is a Relative Term, and muſt be between two; for one Thing could not be ſaid to appear, if there were not another for it to appear to. So that there muſt be both an *Object* and a *Faculty*, before there can be an *Appearance*; and conſequently, from one of theſe two muſt ſpring all Falſhood at any Time belonging to it. But the Queſtion is, *From which of them?* And in Anſwer to it, it is certain, that the Object itſelf cannot cauſe a falſe Appearance of itſelf. For if ſo, when the Mind has conceived a falſe Apprehenſion of God, God, who is the Object, would be the Cauſe of that falſe Apprehenſion. But it is certain, that Objects operate not efficiently upon the Faculties; for if they ſhould, ſince the Object is the ſame to all, *viz.* both thoſe who entertain *true*, and thoſe who

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who entertain *false* Apprehensions of it, it would be impossible for the same Thing, so far as it is the same, to produce such contrary Effects. It is the same Body which appears to one of such a Shape, and to another of a quite different. And therefore, the Difference must needs be on the Beholder's Side, and rest in the Faculty of Perception, not in the Thing perceived. This we may pronounce confidently and truly, That the Object duly circumstantiated is never in Fault, why it is not rightly apprehended. Objects are meerly passive; and if they were not so, Men would certainly be both learneder, and better than they are; for neither can Learning, nor Religion thrust itself into the Heads or Hearts of Men, whether they will or no. Truth shews itself to be Truth, and Falshood represents itself as Falshood, (and so far is a good Representer) whether Men apprehend them so or no. For the Object is not to be condemned for the Failures of the Faculty, any more, than a Man, who speaks audibly and intelligibly, is to be blamed for not being heard; nobody being bound to find *Words* and *Ears* too.

Well

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Well then; since a Lye cannot be believed, but under the Appearance of Truth, and since a Lye cannot give itself any such Appearance, it is evident, that if any Man believes a Lye, it is from something in himself that he does so. There are Lyes, Errors, and Heresies about the World, both plausible and infinite, but then they naturally appear what they are; and if Truth be naked to the Skin, Error is, and must be so to the Bone; and the fairest Falshood can no more oblige Assent, than the best dressed Evil can oblige the Choice.

And thus having given both *Falshood* and the *Devil*, the Father of it, *their Due*, and cleared even the grossest Lye, from being the Cause that it is believed, and thereby left it wholly at the Door of him who believes it; let us in the next place enquire, what may be the Causes on the Believer's Part, which make any Object, and particularly a Lye, appear otherwise to him, than really it is, and upon that Account gain his Belief. Now these are Two,

1. An undue Distance between the Faculty and its proper Object.

2. An Indisposition in the Faculty itself. And

1. For

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1. For the first of these. As *Approximation* is one necessary Condition of *Perception*; so, too much Distance prevents and hinders it, by setting the Object too far out of our Reach. And if the Apprehensive Faculty offers at an Object so placed, and falls short of the Apprehension of it, the Fault is not in the Object, but in that. And here, by *Distance*, I mean not only an Interval in point of *Local Position*, which, if too great, certainly hinders all corporeal Perception; but likewise a *Distance, or rather Disparity of Natures*; such as is between *Finite* and *Infinite*, *Material* and *Spiritual* Beings, consisting in the great *Disproportion* there is between one and the other. And from hence it is, that the Mind of Man is uncapable of apprehending any Thing almost of *God*, or indeed of *Angels*; the Distance between their Natures being so exceeding great. For though God, as the Evangelist St. *Luke* tells us, in *Act.* xvii. 27. *be not far from every one of us*; nay, as it is in the next Verse, that he is so near, or rather intimate to us, *That in him we live and move, and have our Being*; so that it is as impossible for us to *exclude* him, as it is to *comprehend* him; yet still the vast *Difference* of his Nature from ours, makes the

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the *Diſtance* between them ſo unſpeakably Great, that neither can our corporeal, nor intellectual Powers form any true Idea of him. And from hence it is, that there is nothing, about which the Mind, and Apprehenſive Faculties of Man, have ſo frequently and foully blundered, as about the Divine Nature and *Perſons*, and (what is founded upon both) the Divine *Worſhip*. But

2. The other Cauſe, which makes any Object, and particularly *a Lye*, appear otherwiſe than really it is, is the *Indiſpoſition* of the Intellectual Faculty; which Indiſpoſition, in ſome Degree or other, is ſure to follow from Sin, both original and actual. For ſo much as there is of Deviation from the eternal Rules of right Reaſon or Morality in the Soul; ſo much there will of neceſſity be of Darkneſs in it too; and ſo much of Darkneſs as there is in it, ſo far muſt it be unavoidably ſubject to paſs a falſe Judgment upon moſt Things that come before it. Otherwiſe there is nothing in Reaſon conſidered purely and ſimply as ſuch, which is, or can be unſuitable to Religion, or indeed to the Nature of any Thing; but ſo much the contrary, that if we could imagine a Man all Reaſon, without any Byaſs from his Senſitive

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ſitive Part, it were impoſſible, but that, upon the firſt ſufficient Offer, he ſhould (as we may ſo expreſs it) *with both Arms* embrace Religion. But the Caſe has been much altered ſince the Fall of our firſt Parents, and the fatal Blow thereby given to all the Powers of Mens Mind; beſides the further Debilitation and Diſtemper brought upon it, by many actual and groſs Sins. So that now the Underſtandings of Men are become like ſome bodily Eyes, diſabled from an exact Diſcernment of their proper Object, both by a natural *Weakneſs*, and a ſupervening *Soreneſs* too.

And thus I have accounted for the true Cauſe which ſometimes proſtitutes the noble Underſtanding of Man to the loweſt of Diſhonours, the *Belief of a Lye*; namely, either the *Remoteneſs* of the Faculty (whether in point of *Diſtance* or *Difference*) from its Object, or ſome *Weakneſs* or *Diſorder* in it; either of which will be ſure to pervert its Operation; and then a Fault in the firſt Apprehenſion of any Thing, will not fail to produce a falſe Judgment, and that a falſe Belief likewiſe, about the ſame. And ſo I proceed to the

2*d* Particular propoſed, *viz.* to ſhew, *What it is to receive the Love of the Truth.*

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And this we ſhall find implies in it theſe two Things.

1. An high *Eſteem* and *Valuation* of the real Worth and Excellency of it; this is the firſt and leading Act of the Mind. Truth muſt be firſt enthroned in our *Judgment*, before it can *reign* in our *Deſires*; and as it is the *leading Faculty*, ſo it is the Meaſure of the reſt: For no Man's *Love* of any Thing can riſe above his *Eſteem* of it, nor can his *Appetites* exert themſelves upon any Object, not firſt vouched by his *Apprehenſions*. For which Cauſe, the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, the better to advance Religion in our Thoughts, repreſents it by Things of all others the moſt highly accounted of in the World, as *Crowns*, *Thrones*, *Kingdoms*, *hidden Treaſure*, and the like; all which Expreſſions, though far from being intended according to the ſtrict and philoſophical Truth of Things, but rather as Alluſions to them, yet ſtill were founded in the univerſally acknowledged Courſe of Nature, which ever was, and will be, for Men to be firſt allured by the *Worth* of Things, before they can deſire the *Property or Poſſeſſion* of them; and to conſider the *Value*, before they deſign the *Purchaſe*. But, be the Matter as it may, our *Affections*

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(to be ſure) will *bid* nothing for any Thing, till our *Judgment* has ſet *the Price.* Thus St. *Paul* evinces his Love to Chriſt, from his tranſcendent *Eſteem* of him; *I account all Things* (ſays he) *but Dung and Droſs, that I may win Chriſt,* Phil. iii. 8. And he who accounts a Thing as *Dung,* will no doubt trample upon it as ſuch. The Rule of Contrarieties will be found a clear Illuſtration of the Caſe. For *Hatred* generally begins in *Contempt,* or ſomething very like it, and it is certain in Matter of *Fact,* as well as *Reaſon,* that we leave off to *love* any Thing or Perſon, as ſoon as we begin to *deſpiſe* them. He, who in Scorn turns away his Eye from looking upon an Object, will hardly be brought to reach out his Hand after it; Let a Man therefore ſet his Underſtanding Faculty on work, and put it to examine and conſider, to view and review the intrinſick Value of Religion, *what it is, and what it offers,* before he proceeds to make it his Portion ſo far, as to be ready to quit all the World for it, ſhould they both come to rival his Choice, as Competitors; Let him, I ſay, by a ſtrict and impartial Enquiry, deſcend into himſelf, and ſee whether he can upon theſe Terms (for lower and eaſier it knows none)

judge

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judge it absolutely eligible; and if not, let him assure himself, that without a *Passport* from the Judgment, it will never gain a free and full *Admittance* into the Affections. For still it is through the Eye, that Love enters into the Heart. Nay, so mighty an Influence has the judging Faculty in this Case, that it is much disputed, whether the *last Dictate* of the Judgment about any Object does not necessarily determine, and draw after it the Choice of the Will; and perhaps there is scarce any Point in Moral Philosophy, of a nicer Speculation, and an harder Decision; for as the Affirmation of this on the one side seems to border upon Stoicism, and to entrench upon the Freedom of the Will; which after the Supposal of all Things requisite to its Acting, ought nevertheless still to retain a Power to exert, or not exert an Act of Volition; so on the other side, to affirm, that after the Understanding has made the last Proposal of the Object to the Will, the Will may yet refuse it, and go contrary to it, seems to inferr this great Inconvenience, that the Will, in order to its Acting, needs not the preceding Act or Conduct of the Intellect to make a sufficient Proposal of the Object to it, since after it is so proposed, it may

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notwithſtanding divert its Actings quite another Way; and then if it can, in this manner, proceed without a Guide, the Will is not *ſo blind a Faculty* as the Schools make it. For he who goes one Way, when his Guide directs him another, manifeſtly ſhews, that he both can, and does go without him. But I ſhall diſpute this Point no further; it being (as I conceive) ſufficient for our preſent Purpoſe, that the Act of the Underſtanding propoſing the Object, muſt of Neceſſity precede, whether the Act or Choice of the Will follow it or no. Though for my own part, I cannot ſee, that the Holding the Neceſſity of the Will's following the laſt Dictate or Propoſal of the Underſtanding, does at all prejudice its Freedom; (which is rather oppoſed to *Coaction from without*, than to a *Determination* from within) foraſmuch as it was in the Power of the Will to have diverted the Underſtanding from its Application to any Object, before it came to form its laſt Judgment of it; and conſequently, the whole Proceeding of the Underſtanding being under the free Permiſſion of the Will, the Act of the Will cloſing with this laſt Determination, was originally and virtually free, though formally and immediately, in this

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this latter Sense, necessary. As God necessarily does, what he first absolutely decreed, and yet the whole Act is free, since the Decree itself was the free Issue and Result of his Will. But I beg Pardon, if I have dwelt too long upon this Point. It was, because I thought it requisite to shew, what is the Part and Office, and how great the Force and Power of the *Understanding*, in recommending the Truths of Religion to the Souls of Men; that so they may not acquiesce in a slight, superficial Judgment, or Apprehension of them; which, we may rest satisfied, will never have any considerable Effect, or work any through Change upon the Heart; and if so, all will come to nothing; for the Foundation is ill laid, and the Superstructure cannot be firm. And upon this Account, no doubt, it is, that the Scripture ascribes so much to *Faith*; indeed, in effect, the whole Work of Man's Salvation; and yet it is but an Act of the Understanding, and properly and strictly speaking, can be no more: Yet nevertheless, of such a mighty and controuling Influence upon the Will is it, that if it be strong, vigorous, and of the right Kind, it draws the whole Soul after it, and works all those Wonders, which stand recorded of it

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in the 11th of the *Hebrews*, which from firſt to laſt is but a Panegyrick upon the invincible Strength, and heroick Atchievements of this Grace. In a word, if a Man, by *Faith*, can bring his Underſtanding to receive, and entertain the Divine Truths of the Goſpel ſo, as to look upon the Promiſes of it as conveying the greateſt Good and Happineſs to Man, that a Rational Nature is capable of, and the Threatnings of it as denouncing the bittereſt and moſt inſupportable Evils, that a Created Being can ſink under, and both of them as Things of certain and infallible Event: This is for a Man truly to value his Religion, and to lay ſuch a Foundation of it in his Judgment, as ſhall never diſappoint or ſhame his Practice. Accordingly in the

2*d* Place. The other Thing implyed in, and intended by the Receiving the Love of the Truth, is the *Choice* of it, as of a Thing tranſcendently good, and particularly agreeable to our Condition. *Generals*, we commonly ſay, are *fallacious*, but it is certain, that they are always *faint*. And therefore, it is not meerly what is good, as to the general Notion of it, (which can miniſter to little more than bare Theory and Diſcourſe) but particularly, what is *good for me*, which

muſt

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muſt engage my *Practice*. To *eſteem* a Thing, we have ſhewn, is properly an Act of the Underſtanding; but to *chooſe* it, is the Part and Office of the Will. And *Chooſing* is a conſiderable Advance beyond bare Eſteem; foraſmuch as it is the End of it, and conſequently perfects it, as the End does every Action, which is directed to it. It is the moſt proper, genuine, and finiſhing Act of Love. For the great Effect of Love, is to unite us to the Thing we love; and the *Will* is properly the uniting Faculty, and Choice the uniting Act, which brings the Soul, and its beloved Object together. Judgment and Eſteem, indeed, is that which offers and recommends it to the Soul; but it is Choice which *makes the Match*. For the Truth is, the Soul of Man can do no more, nor reach further, than firſt to *eſteem* an Object, and then to *chooſe* it. And therefore, till we have made Religion our fixed Choice, it only floats in the Imagination, and is but the Buſineſs of Talk and Fancy. But it is the Heart after all, which muſt appropriate, and take hold of the great Truths of Chriſtianity for its Portion, its Happineſs, and chief Good. And then, and not till *then*, a Man is practically, and in good Earneſt a Chriſtian; and that which

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before was but *Notion* and Opinion, hereby paſſes into Reality and Experience; and from a meer Name, into the Nature and Subſtance of Religion. For ſtill, if a Man would make his Faith, or Religion, a vital Principle for him to live and act by, it muſt be ſuch an one as the Apoſtle tells us, *works by Love*; there muſt be ſomething of this bleſſed Flame to invigorate, and give Activity to it. But where a Man neither loves, nor likes the Thing he believes, it is odds but in a little Time he may be brought alſo to caſt off the very Belief itſelf; and, in the mean while, it is certain, that it can have no Efficacy, no Operation, or Influence upon his Life or Actions; which is worſe than no Belief at all; for better, a great deal, *none*, than to *no Purpoſe*.

And thus having ſhewn, what is meant by, and implyed in, *the Receiving the Love of the Truth*, it may, I conceive, help us to an eaſy and natural Account of its Oppoſite or Contrary; to wit, the Rejecting, or Not receiving the ſame; the great Sin, as we before obſerved, for which the Perſons here in the Text ſtand concluded under ſo ſevere a Doom. For the further Explication of which, we may very rationally ſuppoſe the Condi-

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tion of those Men to have been this, *viz.* That upon the Preaching of Christianity, the Truth of it quickly overpowered their Assent, and broke in upon their Apprehensions with the highest Evidence and Conviction; but the searching Purity and Spirituality of the same Doctrines equally encountring their worldly Interests, and their predominant beloved Corruptions, soon caused in their Minds a secret Loathing of the Severity of those Truths, and so by Degrees, a direct Hatred and Hostility against them, as the great Disturbers of those Pleasures, and Interrupters of the Caresses of those Lusts, which had so bewitched their Hearts, and seized their Affections. It is wonderful to consider, what a strange Combat and Scuffle there is in the Soul of Man, when clear Truths meet with strong Corruptions; one Faculty or Power of it embracing a Doctrine, because true; and another with no less Fury rising up against it, because severe and disagreeable. Thus, what should be the Reason, that those high and excellent Precepts of Christianity requiring *Purity of Heart*, *Poverty of Spirit*, *Chastity of Mind*, *Hatred of Revenge*, and the like, find so cold a Reception, or rather so sharp a Resentment in the World. Is it because Men

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Men think they are not Truths? By no means, but becauſe they are ſevere, grating, uneaſy Truths; they believe them ſufficiently, and more than they deſire, but they cannot love them; and for that Reaſon, and no other, they are rejected, and thrown aſide in the Lives and Practices of Men; not becauſe they cannot, or do not convince their Underſtandings, but becauſe they thwart, and bid Defiance to their Inclinations. Truth is ſo connatural to the Mind of Man, that it would certainly be entertained by all Men, did it not by Accident contradict ſome beloved Intereſt or other. The Thief hates the Break of Day; not but that he naturally loves the Light, as well as other Men; but his Condition makes him dread and abhor that, which of all Things he knows to be the likelieſt Means of his Diſcovery. Men may ſometimes frame themſelves to hear and attend to the mortifying Truths of Chriſtianity; but then they hear them only as they uſe to hear of the Death of Friends, or the Story of a loſt Eſtate; they are *true*, but *troubleſome* and vexatious. So often does the Irkſomneſs of the Thing reported make Men angry with the Truth of the Report, and ſometimes with the very Perſon of the Reporter

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porter too. And therefore, let none wonder, if God inflicts ſo ſignal a Judgment upon this Sort of Sin. For when Men ſhall reſolutely reject clear, pregnant, and acknowledged (as well as important) Truths, only becauſe they preſs hard upon their Darling Sin, and would knock them off from the pleaſing Embraces of the World, and the Fleſh, and from dying in them; what do they elſe, but ſacrifice the Glory of their Nature, their Reaſon, to their Brutality? And make their nobleſt Perfections bow down, and ſtoop to their baſeſt Luſts? What do they, I ſay, but cruſh and depreſs Truth, to advance ſome pitiful, ſenſual Pleaſure in the room of it; and ſo, like *Herod*, ſtrike off the *Baptiſt*'s Head, only to reward the Dances of a Strumpet? This is the great Load of Condemnation, which lies ſo heavy upon the World, (as St. *John* tells us) *That Men ſee the Light, but love Darkneſs*, bend before the Truth of a Doctrine, but abhorr its Strictneſs and Spirituality. The Doctrine of Chriſtianity being in this, like that Forerunner of Chriſt juſt now mentioned by us; who was indeed (as our Saviour himſelf ſtyled him) a *ſhining*, but withall a *burning Light*. And as the Shining both of the one

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and the other, in the glorious Evidence of Truth beaming out from both, could not but, even in ſpite of Sin, and all the *Powers of Darkneſs*, be infinitely pleaſing to all who had the Sight thereof; ſo its *Burning Quality* exerting itſelf in the ſearching Precepts of Self-Denial and Mortification, was, no doubt, to all vicious and depraved Minds, altogether as tormenting and intolerable. And ſo I proceed to the

3*d* Particular propoſed by us. Which was to ſhew, *How the Not receiving the Love of the Truth into the Will and Affections, comes to diſpoſe the Underſtanding to Error and Deluſion.* Now, I conceive, it may do it theſe following Ways,

1. By drawing off the Underſtanding from fixing its Contemplation upon a diſguſted, offenſive Truth. For though it is not in the Power of the Will, when the Underſtanding apprehends a Truth clearly and diſtinctly, to countermand its Aſſent to it, yet it has ſo great an Influence upon it, that it is able antecedently to hinder it from taking that Truth into a full and through Conſideration. And while the Mind is not taken up with an actual Attention to the Truth propoſed to it, ſo long it is obnoxious to the Offers and

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Impreſſions of the contrary Error. For the firſt *Adherencies*, or rather *Applications* of the Soul to Truth, are very weak and imperfect, till they are furthered and confirmed by a frequent Converſe with it, and ſo, by Degrees, come to have the general Notions of Reaſon endeared and made familiar to the Mind, by renewed Acts of Attention and Speculation; which ceaſing, if a Falſhood comes recommended to the Soul with any Advantage, that is to ſay, with *Agreeableneſs*, though without *Argument*, it is ten to one but it enters and takes Poſſeſſion. And then the Poyſon is infuſed; let the Man get it out again as he can. He who will not inſiſt attentively and cloſely upon the Examination of any Truth, is never like to have his Mind either clearly informed of it, or firmly united to it. For Want of Search is really and properly the keeping off the due Approximation of the Object, without which, a true Apprehenſion of it is impoſſible. So that if a Man has corrupt Affections, averſe to the Purity and Excellency of any Truth, it is not imaginable, that they will ſuffer his Thoughts to dwell long upon it, but will do their Utmoſt to divert, and carry them off to ſome other Object, which he is more inclined to, and enamoured

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enamoured with; and then, what Wonder is it, if under ſuch Circumſtances the Mind is betrayed by the Byaſs of the Affections, and ſo lies open to all the treacherous Inroads of Fallacy and Impoſture? As for inſtance, he, whoſe corrupt Nature is impatient of any Reſtraint from Morality or Religion, will be ſure to keep his Mind off from them, as much as poſſibly he can; he will not trouble himſelf with any Debates or Diſcourſes about the Truth or Evidence of ſuch Things as he heartily wiſhes, were neither *evident* nor *true*. In a word, he will not venture his Meditations upon ſo unwelcome, and ſo afflicting a Subject. And thus having rid himſelf of ſuch Notions; the contrary Documents of Atheiſm and Immorality ſtill bringing with them a Compliance with thoſe Affections which all Thoughts of Religion were ſo grievous to, will ſoon find an eaſy, unreſiſted Admittance into an Underſtanding naked, and unguarded againſt the ſeveral Arts and Stratagems of the *grand Deceiver*. A Man indeed may be ſometimes ſo ſurprized, as not to be able to prevent the firſt *Apprehenſion*, and Sight of a Truth; but he is always able to prevent the *Conſideration* of it, without which, the other can work upon him

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him very little. For though Apprehenſion ſhews the *Object*, it muſt be Conſideration which *applies it*. But again,

2. A Will vitiated, and grown out of Love with the Truth, *diſpoſes the Underſtanding to Error and Deluſion*, by cauſing in it a Prejudice and Partiality in all its Reflexions upon, and Diſcourſes about it. He, who conſiders of a Thing with Prejudice, has judged the Cauſe before he hears it, and decided the Matter, not as really it is, but as it either croſſes or comports with the Principles, which he is already prepoſſeſſed with: The Underſtanding, in ſuch a Caſe, being like the Eye of the Body viewing a white Thing through a red Glaſs, it forms a Judgment of the Colour, not according to the *Thing* it ſees, but according to that *by which* it ſees. And upon the like Account it is, that the Will and the Affections never pitch upon any Thing as *odious*, but that ſooner or later they bribe the Judgment to repreſent it to them as *ugly* too. We know, the Miracles, the aſtoniſhing Works, and excellent Diſcourſes of our Saviour could not ſtrike the Hearts of thoſe whom he preached to, through the mighty Prejudice they had conceived againſt his *Perſon* and *Country*. But

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that they still opposed all, even the most cogent and demonstrative Arguments he could bring for his Doctrine, with that silly Exception, *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* And that one ridiculous Proverb, *That no Good could come out of* Galilee, (as slight as it was) yet proved strong enough to obstruct their Assent, and arm their Minds against that high Conviction, and mighty Sway of Evidence, which shined forth in all his miraculous Works; so that this senseless Saying alone fully *answered*, or (which was as effectual for their Purpose) absolutely *overbore* them all. In like manner, we find it elsewhere observed by our Saviour himself of that selfish, rotten, and yet demure Generation of Men, the *Pharisees*; *That they could not believe, because they received Honour one of another*, Joh. v. 44. They had (it seems) bewitched the People into an extravagant Esteem and Veneration of their Sanctity, and by that Means had got no small Command over their Purses, their Tables, and their Families; nay, and more than ordinary Footing and Interest in the *Jewish* Court itself. So that they ruled without Controul, getting the *highest Seats in Synagogues*, that is, in their chief Assemblies or Consisto-

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Consistories; and they loved also to *feed as high* as they *sate*, still providing themselves with the *best Rooms*, and not the *worst Dishes* (we may be sure) *at Feasts*. Nor would ever such Pretenders *have fasted twice a Week*, but that they knew it afforded them *five Days* besides *to feast in*; so that having thus found the Sweets of a crafty, long-practised Hypocrisy, from which they had reaped so many luscious Privileges, they could not but have an horrible Prejudice against the Strictness of that Doctrine, which preached nothing but Self-Denial, Humility, and a Contempt of the Honours and Emoluments of the World, which they themselves so passionately doated upon; and therefore no wonder, if they threw it off as a Fable, and an Imposture, though recommended with all the Attestations of Divine Power, which had in them a Fitness to inform or convince the Reason of Man. So far did the Corruption of their Will advance their *Prejudice*, and their Prejudice destroy their *Judgment*. But

3*dly*, The third and last Reason which I shall assign for proving, *That the Will's not embracing the Love of the Truth, betrays the Understanding to Error and Delusion*, is from the peculiar Malignity which is in every Vice,

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or corrupt Affection, to darken and besot the Mind, the Νοῦς, the great Guide, and Superintendent of all the Faculties of the Soul; for so near a Connexion, or rather Cognation is there between the Moral and Intellectual Perfection of it, (as I have elsewhere observed) that a great Flaw in the former, never fails in the Issue to affect the latter; though possibly, how this is done, is not so easily accounted for. Nevertheless, that irrefragable Argument *Experience* sufficiently proves many Things, which it is not able to explain, nor indeed pretends to be so. *Aristotle* has observed of the *Vices of the Flesh*, (and his Observation is in a great Degree true of all other) that they do peculiarly cloud the Intellect, and debase a Man's Notions, emasculate his Reason, and weaken his Discourse; and in a word, make him, upon all these Accounts, much less a Man than he was before. And for this Cause, no doubt, has the same Author declared young Men, in whom the forementioned Sort of Vices is commonly most predominant, *not competent Auditors of Moral Philosophy*, as having turned the Force of their Minds

The Reader may please to cast his Eye upon the second Sermon of the 3d Volume, where this Subject is more professedly and largely treated of.

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Minds to Things of a quite contrary Nature. But this Miſchief reaches much further; for ſure it is, that when *wiſe* Men (be their Years what they will) become *vicious* Men, their Wiſdom leaves them; and there appears not that Keenneſs and Briskneſs in their apprehenſive and judging Faculties, which had been all along obſerved in them, while attended with Temperance, and guarded with Sobriety. So that, upon this fatal Change, they do not argue with that Strength, diſtinguiſh with that Clearneſs, nor in any Matter brought into Debate, conclude with that Happineſs and Firmneſs of Reſult, which they were wont to do.

Shew me ſo much as one wiſe Counſel, or Action of *Marcus Antonius*, a Perſon otherwiſe both Valiant and Eloquent; after that he had ſubdued his Underſtanding to his Affections, and his Affections to *Cleopatra*. How Great was *Lucullus* in the *Field*, and how Great in the *Academy?* but abandoning himſelf to Eaſe and Luxury; *Plutarch* tells us, that he ſurvived the Uſe of his Reaſon, grew infatuated, and doated long before he died, though he died before he was old.

All which tends to demonſtrate, that ſuch is the Nature of Vice, that the Love thereof

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entring into the Will, and thrusting out the Love of Truth, it is no wonder, if the Understanding comes to sink into Infatuation and Delusion; the Ferment of a vicious Inclination lodged in the Affections, being like an intoxicating Liquor received into the Stomach, from whence it will be continually sending thick Clouds, and noisome Steams up to the Brain. Filth and Foulness in the one will be sure to cause Darkness in the other. Was ever any one almost observed to come out of a Tavern, an Alehouse, or a jolly Meeting, fit for his *Study*, or indeed for any Thing else, requiring Stress, or Exactness of Thought? The *Morning*, we know, is commonly said to be a Friend to the *Muses*, but a *Morning's Draught was never so.* And thus having done with the third Particular proposed from the Text, come we now to the

4*th*, *viz.* To shew, *How God can be properly said to send Men Delusions.* God (says the Apostle, 1 *Joh.* i. 5.) *is Light, and in him there is no Darkness at all.* And that which in no respect is in him, cannot, we may be sure, proceed from him. Upon which Account, it must needs be very difficult to shew and demonstrate, how God can

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derive Ignorance, Darkneſs, and Deception into the Minds of Men. And the great Difficulty of giving a rational and good Account of this, and ſuch-like Inſtances, drove *Manes*, an early Heretick, with his Followers (called all along the *Manichees*, or *Manicheans*) to aſſert Two Firſt, Eternal, Independent Beings, one the Cauſe of *all Good*, the other the Cauſe of *all Evil*; as concluding, that the Evil which is in the World muſt needs have ſome Cauſe, and that a Being infinitely Good could not be the Cauſe of it, and conſequently, that there muſt be ſome other Principle from the Malignity of whoſe Influence flowed all the Ignorance, all the Wickedneſs and Villany, which either is, or ever was in the World. But the generally received Opinion of the Nature of Evil, *viz.* That it is but a meer Privation of Good, and conſequently needs not an *efficient*, but only a *deficient* Cauſe, as owing its Production and Riſe not to the Force, but to the Failure of the Agent; this Conſideration, I ſay, has rendred that Notion of *Manes* of a Firſt Independent Principle of Evil, as uſeleſs and impious in *Divinity*, as it is abſurd in *Philoſophy*.

This Principle therefore being thus removed, let us ſee how it can comport with

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the Goodneſs, and abſolute Purity of the Divine Nature, to have ſuch Effects aſcribed to it, and how, without any Derogation to the glorious Attribute of God's Holineſs, he can be ſaid to ſend the *Deluſions*, mentioned in the Text, into the Minds of Men. Now, I conceive, he may be ſaid to do it theſe four Ways.

1. Firſt by withdrawing his enlightning Influence from the Underſtanding. This, I confeſs, may ſeem at firſt an obſcure, enthuſiaſtick Notion to ſome; but give me leave to ſhew, that there is ſufficient Ground for it in Reaſon. And for this Purpoſe, I ſhall obſerve to you, that it was the Opinion of ſome *Philoſophers*, particularly of *Ariſtotle*, and ſince him of *Averroes*, *Avicenna*, and ſome others, that there was one *Univerſal Soul* belonging to the whole Species, or Race of Mankind, and indeed to all Things elſe according to their Capacity: Which Univerſal Soul, by its reſpective Exiſtence in, and Communication of itſelf to each particular Man, did exert in him thoſe noble Acts of Underſtanding, and Ratiocination, proper to his Nature; and thoſe alſo in a different Degree and Meaſure of Perfection, according as the different Craſis or Diſpoſition of the Organs of the

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the Body made it more or leſs fit to receive the Communication of that *Univerſal Soul*; which Soul only (by the way) they held to be immortal; and that every particular Man, both in reſpect of *Body* and *Spirit*, was mortal: His *Spirit* being nothing elſe but a more refined Diſpoſition and Elevation of *Matter*.

Others deteſting the Impiety of this Opinion, did allow to every Individual Perſon a diſtinct immortal Soul, and that alſo endued with the Power and Faculty of Underſtanding and Diſcourſe inherent in it. But then, as to the Soul's Uſe, and actual Exerciſe of this Faculty; upon their obſerving the great Difference between the ſame Object, as it was *ſenſible*, and affected the Senſe, and as it was *intelligible*, and moved the Underſtanding, they held alſo the Neceſſity of another Principle without the Soul, to advance the Object, *à gradu ſenſibili ad gradum intelligibilem*, (as they ſpeak) and ſo to make it actually fit to move and affect the Intellect. And this they called an *Intellectus Agens*; ſo that although the Soul was naturally endued with an Intellective Power; yet, by reaſon of the great Diſtance of material, corporeal Things from the ſpiritual Nature of it,

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it could never actually apprehend them, till this *Intellectus Agens* did irradiate and shine upon them, and so prepare and qualify them for an *Intellectual* Perception. And this *Intellectus Agens*, some, and those none of the lowest Form in the *Peripatetick* School, have affirmed to be no other than God himself, *That great Light which enlightens not only every Man*, but every Thing (according to its Proportion) *in the World.*

The Result and Application of which Discourse to my present Purpose is this, That certainly * *those* great Masters of Argument and Knowledge could not but have some weighty and considerable Reasons thus to interest an External Principle in the Intellectual Operations of Man's Mind. And so much of Reason, do I, for my part, reckon to be at the Bottom of this Opinion, that I have been often induced to think, that if we should but

* *For it is ascribed to no less Persons, than to* Plato, *and* Aristotle *after him, (as borrowing it from him) and that by several of the most eminent Interpreters of the latter, both Ancient and Modern; all of them proceeding upon this Ground, That in order to the actual Intellection of any Object, there is a spiritual, intellectual Light necessary to enable the Object to move, or affect the intellective Faculty, which yet the Object cannot give to itself, nor yet strike or move the said Faculty without it. And therefore they say, that there is required an* Intellectus Agens, *or Being distinct both from the Object and the Faculty too, which may so advance and spiritualize the Object, by*

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but ſtrip Things of meer Words and Terms, and reduce Notions to Realities, there would be found but little Difference (ſo far as it reſpects Man's Underſtanding) between the *Intellectus Agens* aſſerted by ſome Philoſophers, and the *univerſal Grace, or common Aſſiſtances of the Spirit* aſſerted by ſome *Divines*; (and particularly by *John Goodwin* calling it, *The* Pagan's *Debt and Dowry*) and that the Aſſertors of both of them ſeem to found their ſeveral Aſſertions upon much the ſame Ground; namely, upon their Apprehenſion of the *Natural Impotence* of the Soul of Man, im-

caſting an higher Light upon it, as to render it fit, and prepared thereby for an intellectual Perception. And forasmuch as every Thing which is ſuch or ſuch Secondarily, *and by* Participation *from another, ſuppoſes ſome other to be ſo* Primarily, *and* Originally by and from itſelf; *and ſince God is the* Primum Intelligibile *in the intellectual World, as the Sun is the* Primum Viſibile *in the ſenſible and material World; they affirm the ſame Neceſſity of a ſuperiour and intellectual Light iſſuing from God, in order to move the Intellect, and form in it an intellectual Apprehenſion of Things, which there is of a Light beaming from the Sun, for the cauſing an Act of Viſion in the viſive Faculty. And this they inſiſt upon, not only as a Similitude for Illuſtration, but as a Kind of Parallel-Caſe, as to this particular Inſtance, how widely ſoever the Things compared may differ from one another upon many other Accounts. This, I ſay, was held by ſeveral of the moſt noted of the* Peripatetick *Tribe, though others, I know, who are profeſſedly of the ſame, do yet in this Matter go quite another Way; allowing indeed, that there is, and muſt be an* Intellectus Agens, *but that it is no more than a different* Faculty *of the*

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merſed in *Matter* to raiſe itſelf to ſuch ſpiritual and ſublime Operations, as we find it does, without the Aſſiſtance of ſome higher and divine Principle. And accordingly this being admitted, that the Soul is no otherwiſe able to exert its Intellectual Acts, than by a Light continually flowing in upon it, from the great Fountain of Light, (whether that Light aſſiſts it by ſtrengthening the Faculty itſelf, or brightening the Object, or both, it matters not, ſince the Reſult of both, as to the main Iſſue of the Action, will be the ſame.) I ſay, this being admitted, that God beams this Light into Man's Underſtanding, and that, as a Free Agent, by voluntary Communications; ſo that he may withdraw or ſuſpend, what he thus communicates, as he pleaſes; how natural, how agreeable to Reaſon is it to conceive, that God being provoked by groſs Sins, may deliver the

ſame Soul, or a different Function *of the ſame Faculty; but by no means an Agent, or intelligent Being diſtinct from it. This, I confeſs, is of very nice Speculation, and made ſo by the Arguments producible on both Sides, and conſequently not ſo proper to make a Part in ſuch a popular Diſcourſe as I am here engaged in; nor ſhould I have ever mentioned it barely as a* Philoſophical Point, *but as I conceived it improvable into a* Theological Uſe, *as I have endeavoured to improve it in the* Diſcourſe *itſelf; to which therefore, I have choſe rather to annex this by way of* Annotation *on the Side, than to inſert it into the Body thereof.*

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the Sinner to *Deluſion* and Infatuation, by a Suſpenſion and Subſtraction of this Light? For may not God blaſt the Underſtanding of ſuch an one, by ſhutting up thoſe Influences, which were wont to enliven his Reaſon in all its Diſcourſes and Argumentations. Certain it is, that this frequently happens; and that the Wit and Parts of Men, *who hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs*, are often blaſted, ſo that there is a viſible Decay of them, a ſtrange, unuſual Weakneſs and Failure in them; and this not to be aſcribed to any known Cauſe in the World, but to the juſt Judgment of God, ſtopping that eternal Fountain from which they had received their continual Supplies. This to me ſeems very intelligible, and equally rational. And accordingly may paſs for the firſt Way, by which God may be ſaid to *ſend Deluſion* into the Minds of Men. But

2. God may be ſaid to do the ſame, by giving Commiſſion to the great Deceiver, and Spirit of Falſhood to abuſe and ſeduce the Sinner. A ſignal and moſt remarkable Example of which, we have in 1 *King.* xxii. 22. when *Ahab* was grown full Ripe for Deſtruction, we find this Expedient for his Ruin pitched upon; *viz. That he was to be perſuaded*

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suaded to go up to Ramoth Gilead, *to fall there.* But how, and by what Means was this to be effected? Why, the Text tells us, *That there came forth a Spirit,* and stood *before the Lord,* and said, *I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith?* And he said, *I will go forth, and will be a Lying Spirit in the Mouth of all his Prophets.* And God said, *Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, and do so.* We see here the evil Spirit sent forth, and fully empowered by Almighty God to accomplish his Delusions upon a bold, incorrigible Sinner. And what Method God took then, we cannot deny, or prove it unreasonable, but that he may take still; where the same Sins prepare and fit Men for the same Perdition.

How the Devil conveys his Fallacies to the Minds of Men, and by what Ways and Arts he befools their Understandings, I shall not here dispute; nor, being sure of the Thing itself, from the Word of God, *that it is so,* shall I be much solicitous about the *Manner how.* But thus much we may truly, and, by Consequence, safely say, that since it is too evident, that the Devil can make false Resemblances and Representations of Things pass before our Bodily Eyes; so that we shall

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be induced to believe, that we see that, which physically, and indeed, we do *not see*: Why may he not also suggest false Images of Things, both to the Imagination, and to the Intellectual Eye of the Mind, (as different as they are from one another) and so falsify our Notions, and disorder our Apprehensions? It is plainly asserted in 2 *Cor.* iv. 4. *That the God of this World has blinded the Minds of them which believe not.* The great Sophister, and Prince of Darkness (God permitting him) can strangely blindfold our Reason, and muffle our Understanding; and, no doubt, the chiefest Cause, that most of the obstinate, besotted Sinners of the World are not sensible, that the Devil blinds and abuses them, is, that he has indeed actually done so already.

For, how dreadfully did God consign over the Heathen World to a perpetual Slavery to his Deceits? They worshipped him, they consulted with him, and so absolutely were they sealed up under the Ruling Cheat, that they took all his Tricks and Impostures for *Oracle* and *Instruction*. And the Truth is, when Men, under the powerful Preaching of the Gospel, (such as the Church of *England* has constantly afforded) will grow Heathens

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in the Viciouſneſs of their Practices, it is but juſt with God, to ſuffer them (by a very natural Tranſition) to grow Heathens too in the Groſſneſs of their Deluſions.

3. A third Way, by which God may be ſaid *to ſend Men Deluſions*, is by a providential Diſpoſing of them into ſuch Circumſtances of Life, as, through a peculiar Suitableneſs to their Corruption, have in them a ſtrange Efficacy to delude and impoſe upon them. God, by a ſecret, unobſerved Trace of his Providence, may caſt Men under an heterodox, ſeducing Miniſtry, or he may order their Buſineſs and Affairs ſo, that they ſhall light into atheiſtical Company, grow acquainted with Hereticks, or poſſibly meet with peſtilent Books, and with Arguments ſubtilly and ſpeciouſly urged againſt the Truth; all which falling in with an ill-inclined Judgment, and worſe-ordered Morals, will wonderfully recommend and ſet off the very worſt of Errors to a Mind thus prepared for their Admiſſion. No Guard being ſufficient to hinder their entring, and taking Poſſeſſion, but where Caution and Vertue keep *the Door*. The Want of which Quality has been the grand, if not ſole Cauſe, which in all Ages has brought ſo many over to, and

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in the Iſſue ſettled and confirmed them in ſome of the fouleſt Sects, and abſurdeſt Hereſies, that ever infeſted the Chriſtian Church; and ſo deeply have the Wretches drank in the Deluſion, that they have lived and died in it, and tranſmitted the ſurviving Poyſon of it to Poſterity. And yet, as far and wide as ſuch Hereſies have reigned and raged in their Time, and as woful an Havock as they have made of Souls, they have been often taken up at firſt by meer Accident, or upon ſome ſlight, trivial, unprojected Occaſion; no leſs unperceivable in their Riſe, than afterward formidable in their Progreſs. But, as what is ſaid of *Affliction*, in *Job* v. 6. may with equal Truth and Pertinence be ſaid of every *notable Event*, *bad*, as well as *good*, namely, *that it comes not out of the Duſt*; ſo the Direction of all ſuch ſmall, and almoſt undiſcernible Cauſes to ſuch mighty Effects, as often follow from them, can proceed from nothing, but that all-comprehending Providence, which caſts its ſuperintending Eye, and governing Influence over all, even the moſt minute and inconſiderable Paſſages in the World; inconſiderable indeed in themſelves, but in their Conſequences by no means ſo.

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And therefore, as we find it expressed of him who kills a Man unwillingly, and by some undesigned Stroke or Accident, *That God delivers that Man into his Hands*, Exod. xxi. 12. so when a Man, by such odd, unforeseen Ways and Means, as we have before mentioned, comes to be drawn into any false, erroneous Belief or Persuasion, it may, with as true and solid Consequence, be affirmed, that by all this *God sends such a Man a Delusion.* As for instance, when by the special Disposal of God's Providence, *Hushai the* Archite *suggested that Counsel to* Absalom, in 2 *Sam.* xvii. 11, 12. which he believed, and followed to his Destruction; we may say, and that neither improperly, nor untruly, That God sent him that Deception; for it is expressly added in the 14th *Verse*, *That God had appointed to defeat the Counsel of* Ahitophel, *to the Intent that he might bring Evil upon* Absalom. Likewise how emphatically full and pregnant to the same Purpose, is that Instance of a false Prophet accustomed to deceive himself and others, in *Ezek.* xiv. 9. *If the Prophet*, says God, *be deceived when he has spoken a Thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet.* God here names and appropriates the Action to himself,

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ſelf, by a Way of proceeding incomprehenſible indeed, but unqueſtionably juſt.

Let this therefore paſs for a third Way, by which God delivers over a Sinner to Error and Circumvention. Which Point I ſhall conclude with thoſe Exclamatory Words of St. *Paul*, ſo full of Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, in *Rom.* xi. 33. *How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!* ſo many Windings and Turnings, ſo many untraceable Meanders are there in the Providence of God, to carry on the *Deluſion* of thoſe Sinners who have been firſt ſo ſedulous and induſtrious to *delude* themſelves. In all which Paſſages nevertheleſs (how unaccountable ſoever they may be to us) ſtill the *Deluſion* is in him alone, who embraces it, a Sin; but in God *who ſends* it, undoubtedly a *Judgment only*, and a very righteous one too. And now in the

4*th* and laſt place. We are not to omit another notable Way *of God's delivering Sinners to Deluſion*; which is mentioned in the 9th Verſe of the Chapter from whence our Text is taken, namely, his permitting *Lying Wonders* to be done before them. A Miracle in a large and general Senſe is no more, but

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Effectus aliquis manifestus cujus causa ignoratur; A manifest Effect, of which the Cause is not understood: But in a more restrained and proper Sense, it is defined a Work or Effect evident to *Sense*, and exceeding the Force of *Natural Agents*. Now whether such an one can be done to confirm and give Credit to a Fallhood proposed to Mens Belief; God lending his Power for the Tryal of Men, to see, or rather to let the World see, whether they will be drawn off from the Truth or no, may well be disputed; though that Place in *Deut.* xiii. 1, 2. seems shrewdly to make for the Affirmative.

But as for that former Sort of Miracles, which indeed are only *strange Things causing Wonder*, and so may proceed from meer Natural Causes applying *Activa Passivis*, there is no question, but such as these may be done to confirm a false Doctrine or Assertion. Thus when *Pharaoh* hardned his Heart against the express Command, and declared Will of God, God permitted him to be confirmed in his Delusion, by the Enchantments and Lying Wonders of the *Magicians*; all which were done only by the Power of the *Devil*. Forasmuch as Angels, both good and bad, having a full

a full Insight into the Activity and Force of Natural Causes, by new and strange Conjunctions of the Active Qualities of some with the Passive Capacities of others, can produce such wonderful Effects, as shall generally amaze and astonish poor Mortals, whose shorter Sight is not able to reach into the Causes of them.

The Church of *Rome* has (in this respect) sufficiently declared the little Value she has for the old *Christian Truth*, by the *new, upstart* Articles she has superadded to it; and, besides this, to confirm one Error with another, she further professes a *Power of doing Miracles*. So that, laying aside the Writings of the Apostles, we must, it seems, resolve our Faith *into Legends*; and *old Wives Fables* must take Place of the Histories of the Evangelists. And the Truth is, if *Nonsense* may pass *for Miracle*, *Transubstantiation* has carried her Miracle-working Gift far above all the Miracles that were ever yet wrought in the World. But as for the many other miraculous Feats which she and her Sons pretend to, and boast of, I shall only say thus much of them; that though I doubt not, but most of them are the impudent Cheats of

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daring, deſigning Perſons, ſet a foot and practiſed by them, to defy God, as well as to delude Men, yet it is no ways improbable, but that God may ſuffer the Devil to do many of them above what a bare Humane Power is able to do, and that in a *Judicial* and *Penal* Way; thereby to fix and rivet both the *Deceivers* and *Deceived* in a Belief of thoſe Lyes and Fopperies, which in Oppoſition to the *Light* of *Reaſon* and *Conſcience*, they had ſo induſtriouſly enſlaved their Underſtandings to.

And now, I think, it is of as high Concernment to every Man, as the Salvation of his Soul ought to be, to reflect with Dread upon theſe ſevere and fearful Methods of Divine Juſtice. We, through an infinite and peculiar Mercy, have yet the *Truth* ſet before us; the pure, unmixed Truth of the Goſpel, with great *Light* and *Power* held forth to us. But if we ſhall now obſtinately ſhut our Eyes againſt it, ſtave it off, and bolt it out of our Conſciences, and all this only from a ſecret Love to ſome baſe Minion Luſt or Corruption, which that *Truth* would mortify, and root out of our Hearts; Let us remember, that this is the very Height of

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Divine Vengeance; That those, who *love a Lye*, should be brought at length to *believe it*, and (as a Natural Consequent of both) *to perish by it too.*

Which God, the great Fountain of Truth, and Father of Lights, *of his infinite Compassion prevent. To whom be rendred and ascribed* (*as is most due*) *all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore.* Amen.

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Ill-disposed *Affections*, both naturally and penally the Cause of Darkness and Error in the *Judgment*.

PART II.

2 *THESS.* ii. 11.

And for this Cause, God shall send them strong Delusion, that they shall believe a Lye.

WHEN I first made an Entrance upon these Words, I gathered the full Sense and Design of them (as I judged) into this one Proposition, *viz.*

That the Not entertaining a sincere Love and Affection for the *Duties* of Religion, naturally, and by the just Judgment of God also,

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alſo, diſpoſes Men to Error and Deceptions about the great *Truths* of Religion.

Which to me ſeeming to take in, and comprehend the full Senſe and Drift of the Words, I then caſt what I had to ſay upon them into theſe following Particulars.

Firſt, To ſhew, *How the Mind of Man can believe a Lye.*

Secondly, To ſhew, *What it is to receive the Love of the Truth.*

Thirdly, To ſhew, *How the Not receiving the Love of the Truth* comes to have ſuch a malign Influence upon the Underſtanding, as to diſpoſe it to *Error and Deluſion.*

Fourthly, To ſhew, *How God can be properly ſaid to ſend Men Deluſions.* And

Fifthly, Since his Sending them is here mentioned as a *Judgment*, (and a very ſevere one too) the next Thing I propoſed was to ſhew, *Wherein the extraordinary Greatneſs of it did conſiſt.* And

Sixthly and *Laſtly*, To improve the Point into ſome uſeful Conſequences and Deductions from the Whole.

The *four* firſt of theſe I have already diſpatched in the preceding Diſcourſe upon this

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Text and Subject; and so shall now proceed to the

5*th*, Which was to shew, *Wherein the extraordinary and distinguishing Greatness of this Judgment did consist.* For it is certain, that the Text here accounts and represents it above the ordinary Rate of Judgments commonly sent by God.

And this, I conceive, will remarkably shew itself to such, as shall consider it these two Ways.

1. Absolutely in itself.
2. In the Consequents of it.

Under the first of which two Considerations, the peculiar Dreadfulness of this Judgment will more than sufficiently appear, upon these two Accounts: As

1. That it is *Spiritual*; and so directly affects and annoys the prime and most commanding Part of Man's Nature, *his Soul*; that noble Copy and Resemblance of its Maker, *in small* indeed, but nevertheless one of the *livelieſt* Representations of him, that the God of Nature ever drew; and that in some of his greatest and most amiable Perfections. And if so, can any Thing be imagined to come so like a killing *Blast* upon it, as that which shall at once strip it of this glorious Image,

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Image, and ſtamp the black Pourtraiture of the fouleſt of Beings in the room of it? Beſides, ſince nothing can either *pleaſe* or *afflict* to any conſiderable Degree, but by a cloſe and intimate Application of itſelf to a Subject capable of ſuch Impreſſions, ſtill it muſt be the *Spirituality of a Judgment*, which entering where *Body* and *Matter* cannot, is the only Thing that can ſtrike a Man in his principal Capacity of being miſerable, and conſequently, in that Part which enables him (next to the Angels themſelves) to receive and drink in more of the *Wrath*, as well as *Love of God*, than any other Being whatſoever. In a ſpiritual, uncompounded Nature, the Capacities of Pain and Pleaſure muſt needs be equal, though in a corporeal, or compounded one, the Senſe of *Pain* is much acuter, and goes deeper, than that of Pleaſure is ever found to do. Accordingly, as to what concerns the Soul or *Spirit*, no doubt, our chief *Paſſive*, as well as *Active* Strengths are lodged in that, though it being an Object too *near us* to be perfectly apprehended *by* us, we are not able in this Life to know diſtinctly what a *Spirit is*, and what it can bear, and what it cannot. But our great Creator, who exactly *knows our Frame*, and had the

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firſt Ordering of the whole Machine, knows alſo *where*, and by *what* a *Soul* or *Spirit* may be moſt ſenſibly *touched* and *wounded*, better a great deal than we, who are animated and acted by that Soul, do or can. And therefore, where he deſigns the ſevereſt Strokes of his Wrath, we may be ſure, that it is this *ſpiritual Part* of us which muſt be the great Scene, where ſuch Tragical Things are to be acted. So that, if an angry Providence ſhould at any Time ſmite a Sinner in his neareſt Temporal Concerns, we may, nevertheleſs, look upon ſuch an Infliction, how ſharp ſoever, but as a Drop of ſcalding Water lighting upon his Hand or Foot; but when God faſtens the Judgment upon the Spirit or Inner-Man, it is like ſcalding Lead poured into his Bowels, it reaches him in the very Center of Life; and where the Center of Life is made the Center of Miſery too, they muſt needs be commenſurate, and a Man can no more ſhake off his Miſery, than he can himſelf.

Every Judgment of God has a Force more or leſs deſtructive, according to the Quality and Reception of the Thing which it falls upon. If it ſeizes the Body, which is but of a mortal and frail Make, and ſo (as it were)

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were) crumbles away under the Preſſure, why then the Judgment itſelf expires through the Failure of a ſufficient Subject or Recipient, and ceaſes to be predatory, as having nothing to prey upon. But that which comes out of its Creator's Hands, Immaterial and Immortal, endures and continues under the heavieſt Stroke of his Wrath; and ſo is able to keep pace with the Infliction (as I may ſo expreſs it) both by the Largeneſs of its Perception, and the Meaſure of its Duration. He, who has a Soul to ſuffer in, has ſomething by which God may take full hold of him, and upon which he may exert his Anger to the utmoſt. Whereas, if he levels the Blow at that which is weak and mortal, the very Weakneſs of the Thing *ſtricken* at, will elude the Violence of the *Stroke*. As when a ſharp, corroding Rheum falls upon the Lungs; That Part being but of a ſpungy Nature, and of no hard Subſtance, little or no Pain is cauſed by the Diſtillation; but the ſame falling upon a Nerve faſtened to the Jaw, or to a Joynt (the Conſiſtency and Firmneſs of which ſhall give Force to the Impreſſion) it preſently cauſes the quickeſt Pain and Anguiſh, and becomes intolerable. A Cannon-Bullet will do terrible Execution upon

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upon a *Caſtle-Wall*, or a Rampart, but none at all upon a *Woolpack*.

The Judgments, which God inflicts upon Men, are of ſeveral Sorts, and intended for ſeveral Ends, and thoſe very different. Some are only *probative*, and deſigned to *try* and ſtir up thoſe Vertues, which before lay dormant in the Soul. Some again are *preventive*, and ſent to pull back the unwary Sinner from the unperceived Snares of Death, which he is ignorantly approaching to. And ſome, in the laſt place, are of a *punitive* or *vindictive* Nature, and intended only to recompenſe or revenge the Guilt of paſt Sins; as Part of the Sinner's Payment in Hand, and as ſo many *Foretaſtes* of *Death*, and *Earneſts* of *Damnation*.

Accordingly, we are to obſerve, that the Malignity of *ſpiritual Judgments* conſiſts chiefly in this, that *their End*, moſt commonly, is neither *Tryal* nor *Prevention*, but *Vengeance* and *Retribution*. They are *Corroſives* made not to *heal*, but to *conſume*. And ſurely, ſuch an one is the Judgment of being *ſealed up under a Deluſion*. *Sampſon*, we read, endured many Hardſhips and Affronts, and yet ſunk under none of them; but when an univerſal Sottiſhneſs was fallen upon all his

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his Faculties, and God's wonted Preſence had forſook him, he preſently became, as to all the generous Purpoſes of Life and Action, an uſeleſs and a ruined Perſon.

Whereas, on the other ſide, ſuppoſe, that God ſhould viſit a Man with extreme Poverty; yet ſtill, he, who is *as poor as* Job, may be as *humble*, as *patient*, and as *pious* as *Job* too; and ſuch Qualities will be always accounted *Pearls* and *Treaſures*, though found upon the vileſt *Dung-hill*: Or, what if God ſhould daſh a Man's Name and Reputation, and make him a Scorn and a By-Word to all who know him; yet *ſtill the Shame of the Croſs* was greater, and one may be made the Way and Paſſage *to a Crown*, as well as the other? It was ſo, we are aſſured, to our great *Spiritual Head*, and why may it not, in its Proportion, prove the ſame likewiſe to his *Spiritual Members?* For the Conjunction between them is intimate, and the Inference natural. Or what again, if God ſhould think fit to ſmite a Man with Sores, Sickneſs, and noiſome Ulcers in his Body; yet even theſe, as offenſive as they are, cannot unqualify a *Lazarus* for *Abraham's Boſom*. And ſo for all other Sorts of Calamities incident to this mortal State; ſhould we ranſack all the Magazines

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gazines of God's Temporal Judgments, not one of them all, nor yet all of them together, can reach a Man in that, which alone can render him truly happy or miſerable. For *though the Mountains* (as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes it) *ſhould be carried into the Sea*, and the whole World about him ſhould be in a Flame, yet ſtill (as *Solomon* ſays) *a wiſe, and a good Man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf*; his Happineſs is in his own Keeping; he has *it at Home*, and therefore needs not ſeek for *it Abroad*. But

2. The Greatneſs of the *Judgment* of being brought under the Power of *a Deluſion*, conſiſts not only *in the Spirituality* of it, whereby it poſſeſſes and perverts the whole Soul in all the Powers and Offices of it, but more particularly, that it blaſts a Man in that peculiar, topping Perfection of his Nature, *his Underſtanding*: For Ignorance and Deception are the very Bane of the Intellect, the Diſeaſe of the Mind, and the utmoſt Diſhonour of Reaſon: There being no Sort of Reproach which a Man reſents with ſo keen, and ſo juſt an Indignation, as the Charge of Folly. The very Word *Fool* draws Blood, and nothing but Death is thought an Equivalent to the Slander: Foraſmuch as it carries in it an

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insulting Negative upon that, which constitutes the Person so charged properly a Man: Every Degree of Ignorance being so far a Recess and Degradation from Rationality, and consequently from Humanity itself. Nor is this any Modern Fancy or Caprice lately taken up, but the constant and unanimous Consent of all Nations and Ages. For what else do we think could make the Heathen Philosophers so infinitely laborious, and even to a Miracle, industrious in the Quest of Knowledge? What was it, that engrossed their Time, and made them think neither Day nor Night, nor both of them together sufficient for Study? But because they reckoned it a base, and a mean Thing to be deceived, to be put off with Fallacy and *Appearance* instead of Truth and Reality, and overlooking the Substance and Inside of Things, to take up with meer Shadow and Surface. It was a known Saying of the Ancients, ἀπὸ σώματος Νόσον, ἀπὸ ψυχῆς Ἀμάθειαν· Keep off Ignorance from thy Soul, as thou wouldest a Disease or a Plague from thy Body. For when a Man is cursed with a blind, and a besotted Mind, it is a *sure*, and therefore a *sad* Sign, that God is leading such an one to his final Doom; it is both the Cause and the Fore-

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Fore-runner of his Destruction. For when the *Malefactor* comes once to have *his Eyes covered*, it shews, that he is not far from *his Execution*. In a word, he, who has sunk so far below himself, as to have debased the governing Faculties of his Soul, and given up his Assent to an imperious, domineering Error, is fit for nothing but to be *trumped* and *trampled* upon, to be led by the Nose, and enslaved to the Designs of every bold Incroacher, either upon his Interest, or his Reason. And such, he may be sure, he shall not fail to meet with; especially, if his Lot casts him upon a Country abounding with publick, countenanced, religious Cheats, both Natives and Foreigners, Broachers of Heresies, Leaders of Sects, Tools and Under-Agents to our *Romish* Back-Friends, who can willingly enough allow them all *Conventicles* for the only proper Places to *serve God in*, and the Church (if need be) to *serve a Turn by*; of which, and the like Impostors, it may be truly said, with reference to their abused Proselytes, That they wear and carry the Trophies of so many captivated Reasons about them; That they cloath themselves with the Spoil of their wretched Intellectuals, and so, in effect, tread the very *Heads of their Disciples*

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Disciples under their Feet. This is the Treatment which they are sure to find from such sanctified Deceivers; these the Returns, which *Delusion*, submitted to, still rewards her Votaries with. And may God, I beseech him, in his just Judgment, order Matters so, that such Practices and such Rewards may inseparably accompany and join one another, not only by *an occasional*, but by a fixed and *perpetual Communion.*

In the mean time, if *Slavery* be that, which all generous and brave Spirits abhorr; and to lose the choicest of *Nature's Freeholds*, and that in the most valuable of Things, *their Reason*, be the worst of *Slaveries*; then surely it must be the most inglorious Condition that can befall a Rational Creature, to be possessed, rid, and governed by a *Delusion.* For still (as our Saviour has told us in *Joh.* viii. 32.) *it is the Truth which must make us free*; the Truth only, which must give a Man the Enjoyment, the Government, and the very Possession of himself. In a word, Truth has set up her Tribunal in the Soul, and sitting there as Judge herself, there can be no Exception against her *Sentence*, nor Appeal from her *Authority.*

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But beſides all this, there is yet ſomething further, which adds to the Miſery of this Kind of Slavery and Captivity of the *Mind* under Error; and that is, that it has a peculiar Malignity to bind the Shackles faſter upon it, by a ſtrange, unaccountable Love, which it begets of itſelf, in a Man's Affections. For no Man entertains an Error, but, for the Time that he does ſo, he is highly pleaſed and enamoured with it, and has a more particular Tenderneſs and Fondneſs for a falſe Notion, than for a true; (as ſome for a Baſtard, more than for a Son) for Error and Deception by all (who are not actually under them) are accounted really the Madneſs of the Mind. And *Madneſs* (it muſt be owned) naturally keeps off *Melancholy* (though often *cauſed by it.*) For it makes Men wonderfully pleaſed with their own Extravagancies; and few (how much ſoever *out of their Wits*) are *out of Humour* too, in *Bedlam.*

Now the Reaſon of this different Acceptableneſs of *Truth* and *Error* in the firſt Offers of them to the Mind, and the Advantage which the latter too often gets over the former, is, I conceive, from this, That it is natural for Error to paint and dawb, to trim, and uſe more of Art and Dreſs to ſet it off

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to the Mind, than Truth is observed to do. Which, trusting in its own native and substantial Worth, scorns all meretricious Ornaments, and knowing the Right it has to our Assent, and the indisputable Claim to all that is called *Reason*, she thinks it below her to ask that upon Courtesy, in which she can plead a Property; and therefore, rather enters than insinuates, and *challenges Possession* instead of *begging Admission*. Which being the Case, no wonder, if Error oiled with Obsequiousness (which generally gains Friends, though deserves none, worth having) has often the Advantage of Truth, and thereby slides more easily and intimately into the Fool's Bosom, than the Uncourtliness of Truth will suffer it to do. But then again, we are to observe withall, that there is nothing which the Mind of Man has a vehement and passionate Love for, but it is so far enslaved, and brought into Bondage to that Thing. And if so; can there be a greater Calamity, than for so noble a Being as the Soul is, to love and court the Dictates of a commanding Absurdity? Nothing certainly being so tyrannical as Ignorance, where Time, and long Possession enables it to *prescribe*; nor so haughty and assuming,

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where Pride and Self-Conceit bids it ſet up *for Infallible.*

But now, to cloſe this Point, by ſhewing, how vaſtly the Underſtanding differs from itſelf, when informed by Truth, and when abuſed by Error; Let us obſerve, how the Scripture words the Caſe, while it expreſſes the former by *a State of Light*, and the latter by a *State of Darkneſs.* Concerning both which, as it is evident, that nothing can be more amiable, ſuitable, and univerſally ſubſervient both to the Needs, and to the Refreſhments of the Creature, than Light: So nothing is deſervedly accounted ſo diſmal, hateful, and diſpiriting, as *Darkneſs is*; *Darkneſs*, I ſay, which the Scripture makes only another Word *for the Shadow of Death*; and always the grand *Opportunity of Miſchief*, and the ſureſt *Shelter of Deformity.* For though to want Eyes be indeed a great Calamity, yet to *have Eyes and not to ſee*, to have all the *Inſtruments of Sight, and the Curſe of Blindneſs* together, this is the very Height and Criſis of Miſery, and adds a Sting and a Reproach to what would otherwiſe be but a Misfortune. For nothing Envenomes any Calamity, but the Crime which deſerves it.

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I come now to consider the distinguishing Greatness of the *Judgment* of God's sending Men *strong Delusion*, by taking a View of the Effects and Consequents of it; and we need cast our Eyes no further than these Two. As

1. That it renders the Conscience utterly useless, as to the great Office to be discharged by it in the Regulation and Supervisal of the whole Course of a Man's Life. A blind Watchman (all must grant) is equally a Nuisance and an Impertinence. And such a Paradox both in Reason and Practice is a *deluded Conscience*, *viz.* A Counsellor who cannot advise, and a Guide not able to *direct*. Nothing can be more close and proper to the Point now before us, than that Remark of our Saviour, in *Matth.* vi. 23. *If the Light that is in Thee be Darkness, how great must that Darkness be?* Why; as great, no doubt, and of as fatal Consequence to the Affairs and Government of the Microcosm, or lesser World, as if, in the greater, God should put out the Sun, and establish one great, universal Cloud in the room of it; or, as if the *Moon* and *Stars*, instead of *governing the Night*, should *be governed by it*, and the noble Influences of the one should,

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for Usefulness, give place to the Damps, and deadning Shades of the other. All which would quickly be granted to be monstrous and prepostrous Things; and yet not more so, than to imagine a Man guided by a benighted Conscience in the great Concerns of Eternity; and to have that put out, which God had set up as the Sovereign Light of the Soul, to sit and preside there as the great Pilot to steer us in all our Choices, and to afford us those standing Discriminations of Good and Evil, by which alone a Rational Agent can proceed warrantably and safely in all his Actions.

As for the *Will* and the *Affections*, they are made to follow and obey, not to lead, or to direct. Their Office is not *Apprehension*, but *Appetite*; and therefore the Schools rightly affirm, that the Will, strictly and precisely considered, is *Cæca Potentia*, a blind Faculty. And therefore, if Error has perverted the Order, and disturbed the Original OEconomy of our Faculties; and *a blind Will* thereupon comes to be led by a *blind Understanding*, there is no Remedy, but it must trip and stumble, and sometimes fall into the noisome Ditch of the foulest Enormities and Immoralities. But now, whether this be not one of the

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the higheſt Inſtances of God's vindictive Juſtice, thus to confound a Man with an erroneous, deceived Conſcience, a little Reflexion upon the Miſeries of one in ſuch a Condition will eaſily demonſtrate. For ſee the Tumult and Anarchy of his Mind; having done a good and a lawful Action, his Conſcience alarms him with Scruples, with falſe Judgments, and anxious Reflexions; and, perhaps, on the other hand, having done an Act in itſelf evil and unlawful, the ſame Conſcience excuſes and acquits him, and ſooths him into ſuch Complacencies in his Sin, as ſhall prevent his Repentance, and ſo aſcertain his Perdition. But now, what ſhall a deluded Perſon do in this ſad *Dilemma* of Sin and Miſery? *For, if the Trumpet gives an uncertain Sound, who can prepare himſelf for the Battle?* If it ſounds *a Charge*, when it ſhould *ſound a Retreat*, how can the Soldier direct his Courſe? But, being thus befooled by the very Methods and Means of Safety, muſt of neceſſity find himſelf in the Jaws of Death before he is aware, and betrayed into *his Enemy's Hands*, without any Poſſibility of Help or Relief from *his own?* In like manner, where a Deluſion enters ſo deep into, and gets ſuch faſt hold of the Conſcience, that it

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corrupts or justles out the first Marks and Measures of *Lawful* and *Unlawful*, and thereby overthrows the standing Rules of Morality; a Man, in such a woful and dark Estate, can hardly be accounted in the Number of Rational Agents: For, if he does well, it is by Chance, neither by Rule nor Principle; nor by Choice, but by Luck; and if, on the contrary, he does ill, yet he is not assured, that he does so, being acted, in all that he goes about, by a blind *Impetus*, without either *Forecast* or *Distinction*. Both the Good and Evil of his Actions is brutish and *accidental*, and in the whole Course of them he proceeds, as if he were *throwing Dice for his Life*, or at *Cross* and *Pile* for his Salvation. And this brings me to the other killing Consequence, wherein appears the Greatness of this Judgment of being delivered over to a Delusion. And that is

2. *Final Perdition* mentioned by the Apostle, in the Verse immediately following the Text. *God* (says he) *shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye; that they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth.* This is the Utmost Period, to which Delusion brings the Sinner, but no less than what was intended by it from the very First.

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Every Error is in the Nature of it deſtructive. I do not ſay, that it always actually deſtroys; ſince the *Tendency* of an Action is one Thing, but the *Event* another. For as in the Body there is hardly any *Sore* or *Diſtemper*, (how curable ſoever by Art or Phyſick) but what in the Malignity of its Nature, and the utmoſt Improvement of that Malignity, tends to the Ruin and Demolition of the whole Conſtitution: So in the Soul there is no conſiderable Error, which at any Time infects it, (eſpecially if it diſpoſes to Practice) but being ſuffered to continue and exert its progreſſive and diffuſive Quality, will be ſtill ſpreading its Contagion, and by Degrees eating into the Conſcience, till it feſters into a Kind of ſpiritual Gangrene, and becomes mortal and incurable.

I muſt confeſs, I cannot imagine, that thoſe Hereticks who err fundamentally, and by Conſequence damnably, took their firſt Riſe, and began to ſet up with a fundamental Error, but grew into it by inſenſible Encroaches, and gradual Inſinuations, inuring and (as it were) *training up their Belief* to leſſer Eſſays of Falſhood, and proceeding from Propoſitions only *ſuſpicious*, to ſuch as were *falſe*, from

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from *false* to *dangerous*, and at length from *dangerous* to downright *destructive*. Hell is a deep Place, and there are many Steps of Descent to the Bottom of it; many obscure Vaults to be passed through, before we come to *utter Darkness*. But still the Way of Error is the Way to it. And as surely and naturally as the first Dusk and Gloom of the Evening tends to, and at last ends in the thickest Darkness of Midnight, so every Delusion, sinfully cherished and persisted in, (how easily soever it may sit upon the Conscience for some Time) will, in the Issue, lodge the Sinner in the deepest Hell, and the blackest Regions of Damnation. And so I come to the

6th and last Thing proposed for the handling of the Words; and that was, to draw some useful Consequences and Deductions from the five foregoing Particulars. As

First of all. Since the *Belief of a Lye* is here undoubtedly noted for a Sin; and since Almighty God in the Way of Judgment delivers Men to it for *Not receiving the Love of the Truth*; it follows, by most clear and undeniable Consequence, that it is no ways inconsistent with the Divine Holiness to affirm, that *he may punish one Sin with another.*

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Though the Manner, how God does so, is not so generally agreed upon by all. For some here affirm, that Sin is said to be the Punishment of Sin, because in most sinful Actions, the *Committer of them* is really a *Sufferer in and by* the very Sin which he commits. As for instance, the envious Man at the same Time contracts the Guilt, and feels the Torment of his Sin; the same Thing defiles and afflicts too; merits an Hell hereafter, and withall anticipates one here. The like may be said of Theft, Perjury, Uncleanness, and Intemperance; the Infamy, and other Calamities inseparably attending them, render them their own Scourges, and make the Sinner the Minister of God's Justice in acting a full Revenge upon himself. All this, I must confess, is true, but it reaches not the Matter in Question; which compares not the same Sin with itself, whereof the Consequences may undoubtedly be afflictive, but compares two distinct Sins together, and enquires concerning these, whether one can properly be the Punishment of the other?

Besides, if we weigh and distinguish Things exactly, when the envious Man groans under the Gnawings and Convulsions of his base Sin, and the leud Person suffers the Brand and

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and Disrepute of his Vice; in all this, Sin is not properly punished with Sin; *but the Evil of Envy* is punished with *the Trouble of Envy*, and the *Sin* of Intemperance with the *Infamy* of Intemperance; but neither is a State of Trouble, nor a State of Disgrace or Infamy properly a State of Sin; these are natural, not moral Evils; and opposed to the Quiet and Tranquillity, not to the Vertue of the Soul; for a Man may be vertuous without either Ease or Reputation. This Way therefore is short of resolving the Problem enquired into; which precisely moves upon this Point, *viz. Whether for the Guilt of one Sin God can, by way of Penalty, bring the Sinner under the Guilt of another?*

Some seem to prove, that he cannot, and that in the Strength of this Argument, That every Punishment proceeding from God as the Author of it, is *just* and *good*, but no Sin is or can be so, and therefore no Sin can be made by God the Punishment of another.

But nevertheless, the Contrary is held forth in Scripture, and that as expresly, as Words can well declare a Thing; for besides the clear Proof thereof, which the very Text carries with it, it is yet further proved by those two irrefragable Places, in *Rom.* i. 24. The Apostle

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Apoſtle has theſe very Words, *Wherefore God alſo gave them up to Uncleanneſs*; and again in the 26th Verſe, *For this Cauſe God gave them up to vile Affections.* Beſides ſeveral other Places pregnant to the ſame Purpoſe, both in the Old Teſtament and the New. From all which it is certain, that God may *make one Sin the Puniſhment of another.* Though ſtill it is to be remembred, that it is one Thing for *God to give a Man over to Sin*, and quite another *for God to cauſe him to ſin*; the former importing in it no more, than God's providential Ordering of a Man's Circumſtances ſo, that he ſhall find no Check or Hindrance in the Courſe of his Sin, but the latter implying alſo a *poſitive Efficiency* towards the Commiſſion or *Production* of a *ſinful Act*; which God never does, nor can do; but the other he both may, and, in a *judicial* Way, very often does.

To the Argument therefore alledged, I anſwer thus: That it is very conſonant both to Scripture and Reaſon, to diſtinguiſh in one and the ſame Thing ſeveral Reſpects; and accordingly in *Sin*, we may conſider the moral Irregularity of it; and ſo being in the very *Nature* of it *Evil*, it is impoſſible, that there ſhould be any Good in it; or we may conſider

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consider *Sin*, as to the *Penal* Application of it to the Person who committed it, and *as a Means to* bring the just Judgment of God upon him for what he had done; and so some *Good* may be said to *belong to it*, though there be none at all *in it*.

Or to express the same Thing otherwise, and perhaps more clearly and agreeably to vulgar Apprehensions. *Sin* may be considered either 1*st*, With reference to the efficient Cause of it, the Will of Man *committing* or producing it, and so it is absolutely and entirely Evil. Or 2*dly*, It may be considered, as it relates to the supreme Judge and Governor of the World, *permitting*, *ordering*, *disposing*, *and over-ruling* the Existence and Event of it, to the Honour of his Wisdom and Justice; and so far it may be called *Good*, and consequently, sustain the Nature of a Punishment proceeding from God. But you will reply, *Can Sin be any* Ways good? I answer, *That naturally and intrinsecally* it cannot, but *extrinsecally*, *accidentally*, and *occasionally*, as ordered to a Subserviency to God's Glory, *it may*; and the Providence of God is no further concerned about it. That is to say, it is *good and just*, that God should so order and dispose of an obstinate Sinner,

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(as he did once of *Pharaoh*) that he ſhould, *through his own Corruption*, fall into further Sin, in order to his further Puniſhment; but ſurely, this does by no means inferr, that the Sins he thus falls into *are good*; though God's Ordering of them may be ſo, and *Darkneſs* will be *Darkneſs* ſtill, though God can, and often does *bring Light out of it*. That the *Jews* having rejected the Goſpel ſo powerfully preached to them, ſhould be delivered to Hardneſs of Heart, and final Impenitence, was *juſt*, and, by Conſequence, *good*. But this is far from inferring, that their *Hardneſs of Heart* and *Impenitence* were ſo too. Sin may give Occaſion for a great deal of Good to be exerciſed upon it, and about it, though there be none inherent in it; and upon that Account, when any Good is aſcribed to it, or affirmed of it, it is purely by an *extrinſick Denomination*, and no more.

Now theſe Diſtinctions rightly weighed and applyed, will fully and clearly accord the Doctrine laid down by us, both with the Notions of Humane Reaſon, and the Holineſs of the Divine Nature; and conſequently render all Objections, and popular Exclamations againſt either of them, empty and inſignificant.

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Nor indeed is it very difficult, and much less impossible, to give some tolerable Account, how God delivers a Sinner over to further Sins. For it may be very rationally said, that he does it partly by with-holding his restraining Grace, and leaving corrupt Nature to itself, to the full Swing and Freedom of its own extravagant Actings. Whereby a Man adds *Sin* to *Sin*, strikes out furiously, and without Controul, till he grows obstinate and incurable. And God may be said to do the same also by administring Objects and Occasions of Sin to such or such a Sinner, whose corrupt Nature will be sure to take Fire at them, and so actually to throw itself into all Enormities. In all which, God is not at all the Author of Sin, but only pursues the great Works, and righteous Ends of his Providence, in disposing of Things, or Objects in themselves good or indifferent towards the compassing of the same; howbeit, through the Poyson of Mens vicious Affections they are turned into the Opportunities and Fuel of Sin, and made the Occasion of their final Destruction.

But now of all the Punishments which the great and just God in his Anger inflicts, or brings upon a Man for Sin, there is none comparable

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comparable to *Sin itself.* Men are apt to go on securely, pleasing themselves in the repeated Gratifications of their Vice; and they feel not God strike, and so are encouraged in the Progress of their Impiety. But let them not, for all that, be too confident; for God may *strike*, though they feel not *his Stroke*, and perhaps the more terribly for their *Not feeling it.* Forasmuch as in Judgments of this Nature, *Insensibility* always goes deepest; and the Wrath of God seldom does such killing Execution, when it *thunders*, as when it *blasts.* He has certainly some dreadful Design carrying on against the Sinner, while he suffers him to go on in a smooth, uninterrupted Course of Sinning, and what that Design is, and the Dreadfulness of it, probably will not be known to him till the Possibilities of Repentance are cut off, and hid from his Eyes; at present, it looks like the suffering a Man to perish and die by a Lethargy, rather than jog or awaken him. Believe it, it is a sad Case, when the Sinner shall never perceive, that God is angry with him, till he actually feels the Effects of his Anger in another *World*, where it can neither be pacified, nor turned away.

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2. The second great Consequence from the Doctrine hitherto treated of by us, of the Naturalness of Mens going *off from the Love of the Truth* to a *Disbelief of the same*, shall be to inform us of the surest and most effectual Way to confirm our Faith about the sacred and important Truths of Religion; and that is, *to love them* for their transcendent Worth and Purity; to fix our Inclinations and Affections upon them; and in a word, not only to confess, own, and acknowledge them *to be Truths*, but also to be *willing that they should be so*; and to rejoice with the greatest Complacency, that there should be such Things prepared for us, as the Scripture tells us there are. For we shall find, that *Truth* is not so much upon Terms of *Courtesy* with the Understanding, (which upon a clear Discovery of itself, it naturally commands) as it is with the Will and the Affections, which (though never so clearly discovered to them) it is always almost forced to *woe*, and make *suit* to.

I have been ever prone to take this for a Principle, and a very safe one too, *viz.* That there is no Opinion really good, (I mean *good* in the natural, beneficent Consequences thereof) which can *be false*. And accordingly, when

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when Religion, even *Natural*, tells us, *That there is a God, and that he is a Rewarder of every Man according to his Works; that he is a moſt wiſe Governor, and a moſt juſt and impartial Judge, and for that Reaſon has appointed a Future Eſtate, wherein every Man ſhall receive a Retribution ſuitable to what he had done in his Life-Time.* And moreover, when the Chriſtian Religion further aſſures us, *That Chriſt has ſatisfied God's Juſtice for Sin, and purchaſed eternal Redemption and Salvation for even the greateſt Sinners, who ſhall repent of, and turn from their Sins, and withall, has given ſuch excellent Laws to the World, that if Men perform them, they ſhall not fail to reap an eternal Reward of Happineſs, as the Fruit and Effect of the forementioned Satisfaction; as on the other ſide, that if they live viciouſly, and die impenitent, they ſhall inevitably be diſpoſed of into a Condition of eternal and inſupportable Miſery.* Theſe, I ſay, are ſome of the principal Things, which Religion, both *Natural* and *Chriſtian*, propoſes to Mankind.

And now, before we come to acknowledge the *Truth of them*; Let us ſeriouſly, and in good Earneſt examine them, and conſider, *How good, how expedient*, and *how ſuitable*

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to all the Ends and Uſes of humane Life it is, *that there ſhould be ſuch Things*; how unable Society would be to ſubſiſt without them; how the whole World would ſink into another *Chaos* and Confuſion, did not the Awe and Belief of theſe Things (or ſomething like them) regulate and controul the Exorbitances of Mens headſtrong, and unruly Wills. Upon a through Conſideration of all which, I am confident, that there is no truly *wiſe* and *thinking* Perſon, who (could he ſuppoſe, that the forecited Dictates of Religion ſhould not prove really true) would not however wiſh at leaſt, that they were ſo. For allowing, (what Experience too ſadly demonſtrates) that an Univerſal Guilt has paſſed upon all Mankind through Sin; and ſuppoſing withall, that there were no Hopes, or Terms of Pardon held forth to Sinners; would not an *Univerſal Deſpair* follow an *Univerſal Guilt?* And would not ſuch a *Deſpair* drive the Worſhip of God out of the World? For certain it is, that none would pray to him, ſerve, or worſhip him, and much leſs ſuffer for him, who deſpaired to receive any Good from him. And on the other ſide, could Sinners have any ſolid Ground to hope for Pardon of Sin, without

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an antecedent Satisfaction made to the Divine Juſtice ſo infinitely wronged by Sin? Or could the Honour of that great Attribute be preſerved without ſuch a Compenſation? And yet further, could all the Wit and Reaſon of Man conceive, how ſuch a Satisfaction could be made, had not Religion revealed to us a Saviour, who was *both God* and *Man*, and upon that Account only fitted and enabled to make it? And after all, could the Benefits of this Satisfaction be attainable by any, but upon the Conditions of Repentance, and Change of Life; would not all Piety and Holy Living be thereby baniſhed from the Societies of Men? So that we ſee from hence, that it is Religion alone which oppoſes itſelf to all theſe dire Conſequences, and (like the Angel appointed to guard Paradiſe with a flaming Sword) ſtands in the Breach againſt all that Deſpair, Violence, and Impiety, which would otherwiſe irreſiſtibly break in upon, and infeſt Mankind in all their Concerns, Civil and Spiritual.

And this one Conſideration (were there no further Arguments for it, either from *Faith or Philoſophy*) is to me an irrefragable Proof of the Truth of the Doctrines delivered by it. For that a *Falſhood* (which, as ſuch,

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is the Defect, the Reproach, and the very Deformity of Nature) ſhould have ſuch generous, ſuch wholeſome, and ſovereign Effects, as to keep the whole World in Order, and that a *Lye* ſhould be the great Bond or Ligament which holds all the Societies of Mankind together, keeping them from cutting Throats, and tearing one another in Pieces, as (if Religion be not a *Truth*, all theſe ſalutary, publick Benefits muſt be aſcribed to *Tricks* and *Lyes*) would be ſuch an Aſſertion, as, upon all the ſolid Grounds of Senſe and Reaſon, (to go no further) ought to be looked upon as unmeaſurably Abſurd and Unnatural.

But our Saviour preſcribes Men an excellent and unfailing Method to aſſure themſelves of the Truth of his Doctrine, *Joh.* vii. 17. *If any one* (ſays he) *will do the Will of the Father, he ſhall know of my Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf.* If Men could but be brought to look upon the *Agenda* of Chriſtianity as *ſuitable*, they would never judge the *Credenda* of it *irrational.* There is a ſtrange Intercourſe, and mutual Corroboration between *Faith* and *Practice.* For as Belief firſt engages Practice, ſo Practice ſtrengthens and confirms Belief.

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The Body firſt imparts Heat to the Garment, but the Garment returns it with Advantage to the Body. God beams in peculiar Evidences and Diſcoveries of the Truth, to ſuch as embrace it in their Affections, and own it in their Actions. There may be, indeed, ſome plauſible, ſeeming Arguments brought againſt the Truth, to aſſault and ſhake our Belief of it: But they generally prevail, not by their own Strength, but by our Corruption, not by their Power to perſuade, but by our Willingneſs to be deceived. Whereas, on the contrary, true Piety would effectually ſolve ſuch Scruples, and Obedience anſwer all Objections. And ſo I deſcend now to the

3*d* and laſt of the Conſequences deducible from the Doctrine firſt propoſed by us; and this ſhall be to give ſome Account of the true Cauſe and Original of thoſe two great Evils, which of late have ſo diſturbed theſe Parts of the World; to wit, *Atheiſm* and *Fanaticiſm*. And

1. For *Atheiſm*. Moſt ſure it is, that no Doctrine or Opinion can generally gain upon Mens Minds, but (let it be never ſo ſilly and phantaſtical) it muſt yet proceed from ſome real Cauſe; and more particularly, either

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from the ſeeming Evidence of the Thing forcing a Belief of itſelf upon a weak Intellect, or from ſome ſtrange, unaccountable Inclination of the Will and the Affections to ſuch an *Hypotheſis*. For the firſt of theſe, I would fain ſee ſome of thoſe cogent, convincing Arguments, by which any one will own himſelf perſuaded, that *there is no God*, or that he does not govern the Affairs of the World, ſo as to take a particular Cognizance of Mens Actions, in deſigning to them a future Retribution, according to the Nature and Quality of them here. It being all one to the World, whether there be no God, or none who governs it.

But how pitiful and ridiculous are the Grounds, upon which ſuch Men pretend to account for the very loweſt and commoneſt *Phænomena* of Nature, without recurring *to a God* and *Providence?* Such as, either the fortuitous Concourſe of infinite Little Bodies of themſelves, and by their own Impulſe (ſince no other *Nature* or *Spirit* is allowed by theſe Men to put them into Motion) falling into this curious and admirable Syſtem of the Univerſe. According to which Notion, the blindeſt Chance muſt be acknowledged to ſurpaſs and outdo the Contrivances

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of the exacteſt Art: A Thing which the common Senſe and Notion of Mankind muſt, at the very firſt Hearing, riſe up againſt and explode. But if this Romance will not ſatisfy, then in comes the *Eternity of the World*, (the chief and moſt avowed Opinion ſet up by the *Atheiſts*, to confront and anſwer all the Objections from Religion) and yet after all theſe high Pretences, ſo great and inextricable are the Plunges and Abſurdities which theſe Principles caſt Men into, that the Belief of a *Being* diſtinct *from* the World, and *before* it, is not only towards a good Life more conducible, but even for the Reſolution of theſe Problems more philoſophical. And I do accordingly here leave that *old*, *trite*, *common* Argument (though nevertheleſs venerable for being ſo) drawn from a conſtant Series, or Chain of Cauſes leading us up *to a Supream Mover*, (not moved himſelf, by any Thing but himſelf) a Being *ſimple*, *immaterial*, and *incorporeal*; I leave this, I ſay, to our *High and Mighty Atheiſts* to baffle and confute it, and ſubſtitute ſomething more rational in the room of it if they can; and in order thereunto, to *take an Eternity* to do it in.

But

But if this be the Case, why then is it made a Badge of *Wit*, and an Argument of *Parts* for a Man to commence *Atheist*, and to cast off all Belief of Providence, all Awe and Reverence of Religion? Assuredly, in this Matter, Mens Conviction begins not at their *Understandings*, but at their *Wills*, or rather at their *brutish Appetites*; which being immersed in the Pleasures and Sensualities of the World, would by no means, if they could help it, have such a Thing as a Deity, or a Future Estate of Souls to trouble them here, or to account with them hereafter. No; such Men, we may be sure, dare not look such Truths as these in the Face; and therefore they throw them off; and had rather be befooled into a friendly, favourable, and propitious Lye; a Lye which shall *chuck them under the Chin*, and kiss them, and at the same Time strike them under the *fifth Rib*. To believe that there is no God to judge the World, is hugely suitable to that Man's Interest, who assuredly knows, that upon such a Judgment he shall be condemned; and to assert, that there is *no Hell*, must needs be a very benign Opinion to a Person engaged in such Actions, as he knows must certainly bring him *thither*. Men are *Atheists*, not

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not becauſe they have *better Wits* than other Men, but becauſe they have *corrupter Wills*; nor becauſe they *reaſon better*, but becauſe *they live worſe.*

2*dly*, The next great Evil, which has of late infeſted the Chriſtian Church, and that Part of it in our Nation more eſpecially, is *Fanaticiſm.* That is to ſay, *a Pretence to, and Profeſſion of a greater Purity in Religion, and a more ſpiritual, perfect Way of worſhipping Almighty God, than the National Eſtabliſhed Church affords to thoſe in Communion with it.* This, I ſay, was, and is the Pretence; but a Pretence, ſo utterly Falſe, and ſhamefully Groundleſs, that in compariſon of the *Principle* which makes it, *Hypocriſy* may worthily paſs for *Sincerity*, and *Phariſaiſm* for the trueſt and moſt *refined Chriſtianity.*

But as for thoſe, who own and abet ſuch Separations to the infinite Diſturbance both of Church and State, I would fain have them produce thoſe mighty Reaſons, thoſe invincible Arguments which have drawn them from the Communion of the Church into Conventicles, and warranted them to preferr Schiſms and Diviſions before Chriſtian Unity and Conformity. No; this is a Thing which we may expect long enough, before they will ſo much

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much as offer at, and much leſs perform. There being but little of *Argument* to be expected from Men profeſſing nothing but *Inſpiration*, and the Impulſe of a Principle diſcernible by none but by themſelves. And for my own part, I muſt ſincerely declare, that upon the ſtricteſt Search I have been able to make, I could never yet find, that theſe Men had any other Reaſon or Argument to defend themſelves and their Practices by, but that ſenſleſs and impolitick Encouragement which has been all along given them. But for all that, Men, who *act by* Conſcience, as well *as pretend* it, will do well to conſider, that in Humane Laws and Actions, it is not the Penalty annexed which makes *the Sin*, nor conſequently the *Withdrawing* it which *takes away the Guilt*, but that the Sanctions of Men, as well as the Providence of God may ſuffer, and even ſerve to countenance many Things in this World, which ſhall both certainly and ſeverely too be reckoned for in the next.

In the mean time, to give a true, but ſhort Account of the Proceedings and Temper of theſe Separatiſts. It was nothing but a Kind of Spiritual Pride, which firſt made them diſdain to ſubmit to the Diſcipline, and from thence brought them to deſpiſe, and turn their

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their Backs upon the Eſtabliſhed *Worſhip* of our Church; the ſober, grave, and primitive Plainneſs of which began to be loathed by ſuch brainſick, fanciful Opiniators; who could pleaſe themſelves in nothing but Novelty, and the Oſtentation of their own extemporary, ſenſleſs Effuſions; fit to proceed from none, but ſuch as have the Gift of *Talking* in *their Sleep*, or Dreaming while *they are awake.*

And for this Cauſe, no doubt, God in his juſt and ſevere Judgment delivered them over to their own ſanctified and adored Nonſenſe, to confound and loſe themſelves in an endleſs Maze of Error and Seduction. So that, as ſoon as they had broke off from the Church, (through the Encouragement given them by a Company of Men, which had overturned all that was ſettled in the Nation) they firſt ran into *Presbyterian Claſſes*, from thence into *Independent Congregations.* From *Independents* they improved into *Anabaptiſts.* From *Anabaptiſts* into *Quakers:* From whence being able to advance no further, they are in a fair Way to wheel about to the other Extreme of *Popery.* A Religion and Intereſt the moſt loudly *decryed*, and moſt effectually *ſerved* by theſe Men, of any other in the World beſides.

But

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But whoſoever, in the great Concerns of his Soul, would pitch his Foot upon ſure Ground; Let him beware of theſe Whirl-Pools, and of turning *round* and *round*, till he comes to be ſeized with ſuch a *Giddineſs*, as ſhall make him fall finally and irrecoverably, not from the Church only, but even from God himſelf, and all Senſe of Religion. And therefore, to prevent ſuch a fatal Iſſue of Things; Let a Man in the next place conſider, that the Way to obtain a ſettled Perſuaſion of the Truth of Religion, is to bring an honeſt, humble, and unbyaſſed Mind open to the Embraces of it; and to know withall, that if he *chooſes the Truth in Simplicity*, God will confirm his Choice *with Certainty and Stability*.

To which God, the Father of Lights, *and the Fountain of all Truth, be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore.* Amen.

Covetouſ-

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Covetouſneſs proved no leſs an Abſurdity in Reaſon, than a Contradiction to Religion, nor a more unſure Way to Riches, than Riches themſelves to Happineſs.

IN TWO

DISCOURSES

UPON

LUK. xii. Ver. 15.

PART I.

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LUKE xii. 15.

And he ſaid unto them, take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs; for a Man's Life conſiſteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth.

IN theſe Words our Saviour cautions his Diſciples, and the reſt of his Hearers againſt Covetouſneſs: A Vice, which by ſtriking in with ſome of the moſt active Principles of our Nature, and at the ſame time perverting them too, has ever yet been, and will, no doubt, ever be too hard for all the Rules and Arguments brought againſt it from bare Morality. So that, as a *Grammarian* once anſwered his Prince, offering to enter into a Diſpute with him upon a

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Grammatical Point, *That he would by no means diſpute with one who had twenty Legions at his Command*; ſo as little Succeſs is like to be found in managing a Diſpute againſt *Covetouſneſs*, which ſways and carries all before it, in the Strength of that great *Queen-Regent* of the World, *Money*; the abſolute Commandreſs of Fleets and Armies, and (which is more) very often of their *Commanders* too. So hard has common Experience found it for ſome to draw their Swords heartily, even againſt an Enemy, who has firſt drawn his Purſe to them; ſuch an Univerſal Influence has this mighty Vice: A Vice, which, by a Kind of *amphibious* Quality, is equally ſtrong by *Sea* and *Land*, and conſequently never out of its Element; whatſoever Place, Station, or Condition it may be in. From which, and too many the like Inſtances, it will I fear prove but too evident, that let Philoſophers argue, and Rhetoricians declaim never ſo much againſt this always *decryed*, but yet always *practiſed* Vice; Covetouſneſs will hardly ever loſe its *Reputation* and Credit in Mens *Minds*, (whatſoever it may in their *Mouths*) ſo long as there ſhall be ſuch a Thing in the World, as *Money*, to hold them faſt by.

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The Words contain in them these two General Parts.

First, A Dehortation or Dissuasive from Covetousness. *Take heed, and beware of Covetousness.*

Secondly, A Reason enforcing it, and coupling the latter Part of the Text with the former, by the causal Particle [*For*] *for a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth.*

If we take the whole Complex of the *Dehortation*, and the *Reason* of it together, as they are joined in the Text, we shall find, that they are intended as an Answer to a tacit Argumentation apt to be formed by the Minds of Men, in the behalf of *Covetousness*, and founded upon these three Principles.

1*st*, That it is Natural, (and, I may add also, allowable) for every Man to endeavour to make his Condition in this Life, as *happy*, as lawfully he can.

2*dly*, That to abound with the good Things of this World, seems the direct and ready Way to procure *this Happiness*. And

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3*dly*, That *Covetouſneſs* is the proper and effectual Means to acquire to a Man this *Abundance*.

Upon theſe three Principles, I ſay, is built that Plea or Diſcourſe, with which the Heart of every Worldling, upon the Face of the Earth, endeavours to ſatisfy itſelf of the Reaſonableneſs of Covetouſneſs. It being impoſſible, without ſome Pretence of Reaſon, for a Rational Agent to maintain a quiet Mind in any ill Courſe or Practice whatſoever: No Man ever doing any Thing, which, at the Time of his doing it, he does not actually judge, that he has *Reaſon to do* the ſame, whether that Judgment be right or wrong, true or falſe. And therefore, ſince our Saviour, in the Text we are upon, firſt *ſuppoſes*, and then ſets himſelf to confute this Plea, by overthrowing ſome of thoſe ſophiſtical, or ſophiſtically applyed Principles, upon which it leaned, the particular Knowledge of them was regularly to be premiſed by us, as the Baſis and Ground-work of the whole Proſecution of the Subject now before us. In which, we ſhall begin with the firſt General Part of the Text; to wit, the *Deportation* itſelf, and ſo confining our Diſcourſe wholly

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wholly to this at preſent, we will conſider in it theſe three following Particulars.

1*ſt*, The Author of this *Dehortation*, who was Chriſt himſelf; the great *Inſtructor*, as well as *Saviour* of the World.

2*dly*, The Thing he dehorts us from; to wit, the meaneſt and moſt ſordid of all Vices, *Covetouſneſs*. And

3*dly* and *Laſtly*. The Way preſcribed by him, as the moſt ſovereign and effectual Preſervative from it; to wit, a conſtant Guard, and a watchful Eye over it. *Take heed*, ſays he, *and beware of* it; the preſent Danger, and the conſequent Miſchief making the utmoſt Caution againſt it, no more than ſufficient.

All which Particulars put together, *viz.* The Quality of the *Perſon* dehorting us, the *Nature* of the Thing he dehorts us from, and the *Certainty* of the *Remedy* he adviſes us to, make it diſputable, whether we are to take the Words of the Text, as the abſolute *Command* of a Legiſlator, or the endearing *Counſel* of a Friend: I think we have great Reaſon to account them both, and that the Text will ſufficiently juſtify the aſſigning a double Ground of the *Precept*, where the Doubling

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of that, muſt needs alſo *double* our Obligation to the Practice; while as a *Counſel*, we ought *to follow* it; and as a *Command*, we are bound *to obey* it.

To proceed therefore upon the forementioned Particulars; we ſhall treat of each of them in their Order. And

1. For the great Author of the Dehortation or Diſſuaſion here ſet down, who was Chriſt himſelf. *He ſaid unto them, beware of Covetouſneſs.* That is, [*He*] emphatically [*He*] with a peculiar Significance. For in all Perſuaſions to, or Diſſuaſions from any Thing, the Arguments enforcing both, muſt be either founded upon the Authority of the Perſon propoſing them, or the Reaſon and Evidence of the Thing propoſed. As to the firſt of which, can any Thing in Nature be imagined more convincing, than the Aſſertion or Word of one, whoſe infinite Knowledge makes it impoſſible for him to be *deceived*, and whoſe infinite Goodneſs makes it equally impoſſible for him to *deceive?* The firſt of which muſt be abundantly ſufficient to oblige our *Belief*, and the other to claim our *Obedience.* But both of them inſeparably accompanyed the Words of our Saviour; who (as the Evangeliſt tells us) *ſpeaking as one having Authority*,

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Authority, and (by the very Teſtimony of his Enemies) *as none ever ſpoke before him*, could not ſink below this high Character, in his Diſcourſes upon any Occaſion or Subject whatſoever; but upon none more eminently did he, or could he ſhew it, than upon this of *Covetouſneſs*; where nothing but the ſuperlative Abilities of the Speaker could reach the Compaſs of the Subject ſpoken to; nor any Thing, but the unblemiſhed Vertue of the Reprover, put the Thing reproved out of Countenance, or all Defence of itſelf imaginable. For it is *Innocence* which enables *Eloquence* to reprove with *Power*; and *Guilt* attacked flies before the Face of him who has *none*. And therefore, as every Rebuke of Vice comes, or ſhould come from the Preacher's Mouth, like a Dart or Arrow thrown by ſome mighty Hand, which does Execution proportionably to the Force or Impulſe it received from that which threw it; ſo our Saviour's matchleſs Vertue free from the leaſt Tincture of any Thing immoral, armed every one of his Reproofs with a piercing Edge, and an irreſiſtible Force: So that *Truth*, in that reſpect, never came *naked* out of his Mouth, but either cloathed with Thunder, or wrapped up in all the Powers of Perſuaſion; ſtill his

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Perſon animated, and gave Life and Vigour to his Expreſſion; all his Commands being but the Tranſcript of his own Life, and his *Sermons* a living Paraphraſe upon his *Practice*; thus, by the ſtrongeſt Way of Argumentation, confuting, and *living down* Covetouſneſs long before he *preached* againſt it. For though it is moſt true, that, in Hearing the Word, Men ſhould conſider only the Nature of the Matter delivered to them, (which, if it contains a Duty, will be ſure to make good its Hold upon them, be the Quality of him who delivers it what it will) yet ſince alſo the Nature of Man is ſuch, that in all Addreſſes to him, the Perſon himſelf will be ſtill as much conſidered as his Diſcourſe, and perhaps more; and ſince the Circumſtances of his Condition will always have a mighty, determining Influence upon the Credibility of his Words, we will conſider our Saviour diſcourſing againſt Covetouſneſs under theſe two Qualifications.

1. As he was Lord of the Univerſe. And

2. As he was depreſſed to the loweſt Eſtate of Poverty.

By the former of which, he poſſeſſed *the Fulneſs of the Godhead Bodily*; by the latter, he humbled, and (according to the Apoſtle's

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poſtle's Phraſe) *even emptyed himſelf to the abject Eſtate of a Servant.* He who was the *Firſt-born* of the Almighty, and ſo, by the Title of Primogeniture, *Heir of all Things*, and, by Conſequence, had an univerſal, unlimited Claim to all that was Great or Glorious within the whole Compaſs of Nature, yet had ſo little of this Claim in Poſſeſſion, that he tells us, he was in a poorer and more forlorn Condition, than the very *Foxes of the Field, or the Fowls of the Air*, as to the common Accommodations of Life. It was a Saying in the *Jewiſh* Church, and received with an Univerſal Reverence, both by the *Learned* and *Unlearned*, *That the World was made for the* Meſſias. And we Chriſtians hold, *That it was made by him too.* For he was (as the Prophet *Eſay* ſtyles him) the *Mighty God*, and conſequently, the *Creator* of all *that was not God.* The *Son* of *Abraham* by one Nature, and *Eternally* before *Abraham* by another. And yet this wonderful Almighty Perſon, whom the whole World could not circumſcribe, by reaſon of the Divinity and Immenſity of his Being, had not ſo much in the ſame World, as where to *lay his Head*, by reaſon of the Meanneſs of his Condition. From all which it follows, that

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ſince the Quality of the *Perſon perſuading* makes one great Part or Ingredient in the *Perſuaſion*, nothing could come more invincibly, by way of Argument, againſt *Covetouſneſs*, than a Diſcourſe againſt it from the Mouth of him, who created, governed, and had a rightful Title *to all Things*, and yet poſſeſſed *Nothing*. And thus much for the firſt Thing to be conſidered in the *Dehortation*; namely, the *Perſon dehorting*, who was *Chriſt himſelf*. Paſs we now to the

2*d* Thing to be conſidered in it, to wit, the *Thing we are dehorted from*, which is *Covetouſneſs*. And here, one would think, it might well be ſuppoſed, that there needed no great Pains to explain what this is, if we may rationally conclude, that Men *know* the Things they practiſe, or (in other Words) underſtand what they do; yet ſince the very Nearneſs of the Object ſometimes hinders the Sight of it, and nothing is more uſual, than for Men to be moſt of all Strangers at Home, and to overlook the Darling Sin lying in their own Boſoms, where they think they can never ſufficiently hide it, (eſpecially from themſelves) I ſhall endeavour to give ſome Account of the Nature of this Vice. And that

1. *Nega-*

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1. *Negatively*, by ſhewing what it is not. And

2. *Poſitively*, by declaring what it is, and wherein it does conſiſt; for there is often a Fallacy on both ſides. And

1. For the *Negative*. Covetouſneſs is not that prudent Forecaſt, Parſimony, and Exactneſs, by which Men bound their Expences according to the Proportion of their Fortunes. When the River is ſhallow, ſurely it is concerned to keep within its own Banks. No Man is bound to make himſelf a Beggar, that Fools or Flatterers may account him generous; nor to ſpend his Eſtate to gratify the Humour of ſuch, as are like to be the firſt who ſhall deſpiſe and ſlight him, when it is ſpent. If God beſtows upon us a Bleſſing, we may be confident, that he looks upon it as worth our Keeping. And he only values the good *Providence* of God for giving him an Eſtate, who uſes ſome *Providence* himſelf in the Management of it; and by ſo doing, puts it into his Power to relieve the Poverty of the Diſtreſſed, and to recover a ſinking Friend, when the Circumſtances of Things ſhall ſtamp his Liberality with the Name of Charity and Religion. For indeed, he only is in a true Senſe charitable, who can ſacrifice that

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that to Duty, which otherwise he knows well enough, both how to prize, and make use of himself; and he alone can be said to love his Friend really, who can make his own *Convenience* bow to his Friend's *Necessity*, and thereby shews, that he values his Friendship more than any Thing that his Friend can receive from him. But he, who with a promiscuous undistinguishing Profuseness does not so much dispense, as throw away what he has, proclaims himself a Fool to all the Intelligent World about him; and is utterly ignorant, both of what *he has*, and what he does; till at length having emptyed himself of all, he comes to have his *Purse* and his *Head* both alike.

We never find the Scripture commending any Prodigal but one, and him too only for his ceasing to be so. Whose Courses, if we reflect upon, we shall see his Prodigality bringing him from his revelling Companions, and his riotous Meats, to the Swine, and to the Trough; and from imitating their Sensuality, by a Natural Consequence to take up with their Diet too. Prodigality is the Devil's Steward and Purse-Bearer, ministring to all Sorts of Vice; and it is hard, if not impossible, for a prodigal Person to be guilty

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guilty of no other Vice, but Prodigality. For Men generally are prodigal, becauſe they are firſt intemperate, luxurious, or ambitious. And theſe, we know, are Vices too brave and coſtly to be kept and maintained at an eaſy rate; they muſt have large Penſions, and be fed with both Hands, though the Man who feeds them *ſtarves* for his Pains. From whence it is evident, that that which only retrenches, and cuts off the Supplies of theſe gaping, boundleſs Appetites, is ſo far from deſerving the ugly Name of Avarice, that it is a noble Inſtrument of Vertue, a Step to Grace, and a great Preparation of Nature for Religion. In a word, ſo far as *Parſimony* is a Part of *Prudence*, it can be no Part of *Covetouſneſs*.

And thus having ſhewn *Negatively*, What the Covetouſneſs here condemned by our Saviour *is not*; Let us now ſhew *Poſitively*, *What it is*, and wherein it does conſiſt. And we ſhall find, that it conſiſts in theſe following Things.

1. An anxious, carking *Care* about the Things of this World. Such a Care, as is expreſſed in *Matth.* vi. 28. *by taking Thought*; the *Greek* Word is, τὶ μεριμνᾶτε, and in the 31ſt Verſe, as μὴ ἓν μεριμνήσητε. A Word importing

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importing such a *Thoughtfulness*, as distracts and (as it were) *divides* the *Mind*, and after it has divided it, unconscionably takes both Parts to itself. In short, such a Care is here meant, as lies like a Kind *of Wolf in a Man's Breast*, perpetually gnawing and corroding it, and is elsewhere expressed by St. *Luk.* xii. 29. by *being of doubtful Mind.* As when a Man after all his Labours, in the sober, rational, and industrious Pursuit of his lawful Calling, yet distrusts the Issues of God's Providence for a competent Support therein, and dares not cast himself upon that Goodness of God, which spreads its Fatherly Bounty over all, even the least, the lowest, and most contemptible Parts of the Creation. Such an one is a direct Reproach to his great *Lord* and *Maker*, while he can find in his Heart to think him so careful of the very meanest Rank of Beings, as in the mean time to overlook the Wants of his noblest Creatures, whom he made to lord it over all the rest, and (as a further Honour) designed them for his own peculiar Service; but yet so, that he never intended that they should serve even him the Lord of all for nothing. No; the Methods of Providence are far from being so prepostrous, as while it *adorns the Lilies*

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Lilies, and cloaths the very Graſs of the Field, to leave him *naked*, who was ordered by God and Nature to ſet his *Feet* upon both, and while it *feeds the Fowls of the Air*, and the *Beaſts of the Land*, to ſuffer him to *ſtarve*, for whoſe *Food* both of them were made. Beſides that Man has a Claim alſo to a *Promiſe* for his Support and Suſtenance, which none ever miſſed of, who come up to the Conditions of it. And now, can God require an eaſier and more reaſonable Homage from the Sons of Men, than that they ſhould truſt him, who neither will, nor can fail them? And withall, reſt ſatisfied, quiet, and compoſed in their Thoughts, while they do ſo? For ſurely, the infinite Power and Goodneſs of God may much more rationally be depended upon, than a Man's own pitiful Projects and Endeavours, ſo much ſubject to Chance and Diſappointment, be the Man himſelf never ſo skilful, never ſo laborious. See with what Strength of Reaſon our Saviour argues down this ſollicitous, reſtleſs Temper of Mind, in the forementioned 6th of St. *Matthew*, from this one unanſwerable Conſideration, That if God ſo carefully and tenderly provides for Mankind in their greateſt Concernments, ſurely he will not relinquiſh them in thoſe, where

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where the Difficulty of a Supply is leſs, and yet their Inability to ſupply themſelves altogether as great. *Is not the Life* (ſays our Saviour) *more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?* And ſhall we commit the former to the common Mercies of Providence, but wholly diſtruſt it for the latter? And inſtead thereof, fly for Succour to our own ſhort, fallible Contrivances? When it is certain, that our *Thinking* can no more of itſelf work an Alteration in our *Civil*, than it can in our *Natural* Eſtate; nor can a Man independently upon the over-ruling Influence of God's Bleſſing, *care* and *cark* himſelf one *Penny richer*, any more than one *Cubit taller:* The ſame All-diſpoſing Power no leſs marking out the exact Bounds and Meaſures of our Eſtates, than determining the juſt Stature of our Bodies; and ſo fixing the Bulk and *Breadth* of one, as well as the *Height* of the other. We vainly think, we have theſe Things at the Diſpoſal of *our own Wills*, but God will have us know, that they are *ſolely the Reſult* of *His*. But

2. Covetouſneſs implies in it alſo, a *Rapacity in getting*. When Men (as it were) with open Mouth fly upon the Prey; and catch with that Eagerneſs, as if they could never

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never open their Hands wide enough, nor reach them out far enough, to compaſs the Objects of their boundleſs Deſires. So that, had they (as the Fable goes of *Briareus*) each of them an hundred Hands, they would all of them be employed in *graſping* and gathering, and hardly one of them in *giving* or *laying* out; but all in *receiving*, and none in *reſtoring*; a Thing in itſelf ſo monſtrous, that nothing in Nature beſides is like it, except it be *Death* and the *Grave*, the only Things I know, which are always robbing and carrying off the Spoils of the World, and never making Reſtitution. For otherwiſe, all the Parts of the Univerſe, as they borrow of one another, ſo they ſtill pay what they borrow, and that by ſo juſt and well-balanced an Equality, that their Payments always keep pace with their Receipts. But on the contrary, ſo great, and ſo voracious a Prodigy is Covetouſneſs, that it will not allow a Man to ſet Bounds to his *Appetites*, though he feels himſelf ſtinted in his *Capacities*; but impetuouſly puſhes him on to *get* more, while he is at a Loſs for Room to *beſtow*, and an Heart to enjoy what he has already. This ravenous Vultur-like Diſpoſition the Wiſe-Man expreſſes, by making *Haſte to be rich*,

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Prov. xxviii. 20. adding withall, that he who does ſo, *ſhall not be innocent.* The Words are a *Meioſis*, and import much more than they expreſs, as there is great Reaſon they ſhould; for ſo much of Violence is there in the Courſe or Practice here declared againſt, that neither Reaſon nor Religion, Duty nor Danger ſhall be able to ſtop ſuch an one in his Career, but that he will leap over all Mounds and Fences, break through Right and Wrong, and even venture his Neck in Purſuit of the Deſign his Head and his Heart are ſo ſet upon. And this, I confeſs, is *Haſte with a Witneſs*, but not one Degree more, than what is implyed in *making haſte to be rich.* For from hence it is, that we ſee ſome Eſtates like *Muſhrooms* ſpring up in a Night, and ſome who were *begging* or *borrowing* at the beginning of the Year, ready to be *Purchaſers* before it comes about. But this is by no means the Courſe or Method of Nature: the Advances of which are ſtill gradual, and ſcarce diſcernible in their Motions, but only viſible in their Iſſue. For nobody perceives the Graſs grow, or the Shadow move upon the Dial, till after ſome Time and Leiſure we reflect upon their *Progreſs.* In like manner, uſually and naturally, Riches, if lawful,

riſe

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riſe by Degrees, and rather come dropping by ſmall Proportions into the honeſt Man's Coffers, than pouring in like a Torrent or *Land-Flood*, which never brings ſo much Plenty where at length it ſettles, but it does as much Miſchief all along where it paſſes.

Upon the whole Matter, the *greedy Getter* is like the *greedy Eater*; it is poſſible, that by taking in too faſt, he may choak or ſurfeit, but he will hardly nouriſh and ſtrengthen himſelf, or ſerve any of the noble Purpoſes of Nature, which rather intends the Security of his Health, than the Gratification of his Appetite.

And in this reſpect, Covetouſneſs, a Thing of itſelf bad enough, is heightened by the Conjunction of another every whit as *bad*, which is *Impatience*. A Quality ſudden, eager, and inſatiable, which graſps at all, and admits of no Delay; ſcorning to wait God's Leiſure, and attend humbly and dutifully upon the Iſſues of his wiſe and juſt Providence. Such Perſons would have Riches make *themſelves Wings to fly to them*; though one, much wiſer than they, has aſſured us, *Prov.* xxiii. 5. that when *they make themſelves Wings*, they intend *to fly away*.

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But certainly, in this Buſineſs of *growing rich*, poor Men (though never ſo poor) ſhould ſlack their Pace, (how open ſoever they found the Way before them) and (as we may ſo expreſs it) join ſomething of the *Cripple* to the *Beggar*, and not think to fly, or run forthwith to a total and immediate Change of their Condition, but to conſider, that both Nature and Religion love to proceed leiſurely and gradually, and ſtill to place a middle State between two Extreams. And therefore, when God calls needy, hungry Perſons to Places and Opportunities of raiſing their Fortunes, (a Thing which of late has happened very often) it concerns them to think ſeriouſly of the Greatneſs of the Temptation which is before them, and to conſider the Danger of a *full Table* to a Perſon ready to *ſtarve*. But generally ſuch, as in this manner ſtep immediately out of *Poverty* into *Power*, know no Bounds, but are infinite and intolerable in their Exactions. So that in *Prov.* xxviii. 3. *Solomon* moſt elegantly compares *a poor Man oppreſſing the Poor, to a ſweeping Rain which leaves no Food.* A Rain which drives and carries off all clean before it; the leaſt Finger of a poor Oppreſſor being heavier than the Loins of a rich one;

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one; for while one is contented to fleece the Skin, the other ſtrips the *very Bones*. And all this to redeem the Time of his former Poverty, and at one Leap (as it were) to paſs from a low and indigent, into a full and magnificent Condition. Though, for the moſt part, the righteous Judgment of God overtakes ſuch Perſons in the Iſſue, and commonly appoints this for their Lot, *That Eſtates ſudden in the Getting, are but ſhort in the Continuance.* They roſe (as I ſhew) like *Land-Floods*, and like them they *fell.*

3. Covetouſneſs implies in it all ſiniſter and illegal Ways of getting. And if we dwell fully upon this, we ſhall find, that it is not for nothing, that Covetouſneſs is called by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* vi. 10. *The Root of all Evil*; a Root as odious for its Branches, as the Branches for their Fruit; a Root fed with *Dirt* and *Dung-hills*, and ſo no wonder, if of as much *Foulneſs*, as *Fertility*: There being no Kind of Vice whatſoever, but Covetouſneſs is ready to adopt, and make uſe of it, ſo far as it finds it inſtrumental to its Deſigns; and ſuch is the Cognation between all Vices, that there is hardly any, but what very often happens to be inſtrumental, and conducing to others beſides itſelf. It is Cove-

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touſneſs which commands in chief, in moſt of the Inſurrections and Murders, which have infeſted the World; and moſt of the Perjuries and *pious Frauds* which have ſhamed down Religion, and even diſſolved Society, have been reſolved into the commanding Dictates of this Vice. So that, whatſoever has been pretended, Gain has ſtill been the Thing aimed at, both in the groſſer Outrages of an open Violence, and the ſanctified Rogueries of a more refined Diſſimulation. None ever acted the Traytor and the *Judas* expertly, and to the Purpoſe, but ſtill there was a *Quid dabitis* behind the Curtain. Covetouſneſs has been all along, even in the moſt villanous Contrivances, the principal, though hidden Spring of Motion; and lying, cheating, hypocritical Prayers and Faſtings the ſure Wheels, by which the great Work (as they called it) has ſtill gone forward. Nay, ſo mighty a Sway does this pecuniary Intereſt bear even in Matters of Religion; that *Toleration* itſelf, (as ſovereign a Vertue as it is ſaid to be of, for preſerving Order and Diſcipline in the Church) yet, without *Contribution*, would hardly be able to ſupport the Separate Meetings of the Diſſenting Brotherhood; but that, if the People ſhould

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once grow ſullen, and ſhut up their Purſes, it is ſhrewdly to be feared, that the Preachers themſelves would ſhut up the Conventicles too; at preſent, 'tis confeſſed, the Trade is quick and gainful, but ſtill like other Trades, not to be carryed on without Money. Gold is the beſt Cordial to keep the *Good-Old-Cauſe* in Heart: And there is little Danger of its *fainting*, and much leſs of *ſtarving*, with ſo much of that in its Pocket.

The Truth is, Covetouſneſs is a Vice of ſuch a general Influence and Superintendency over all other Vices, that it will ſerve *its Turn*, even by thoſe, which at firſt View ſeem moſt contrary to it. So that it will command Votaries to itſelf, even out of the Tribe of *Epicurus*, and make *Uncleanneſs*, *Drunkenneſs*, and *Intemperance* itſelf miniſter to its Deſigns; for let a Man be but rich and great, and there ſhall be enough to humour him in his *Luſts*, that they may go Sharers with him in his *Wealth*; enough to drink, and ſot, and carouſe with him, if by *drinking* with him, they may come alſo to *eat*, and drink, and live *upon him*, and by *creeping* into his Boſom, to get into his Pocket too; ſo that we need not go to the

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cozening, lying, perjured Shop-Keeper, who will curſe himſelf into Hell forty Times over, to gain *Two-Pence* or *Three-Pence* in the Pound extraordinary, and ſits retailing away Heaven and Salvation for Pence and Half-Pence, and ſeldom vends any Commodity, but he ſells his Soul with it, *like brown Paper*, into the Bargain. I ſay, we need not go to theſe forlorn Wretches, to find where the covetous Man dwells; for ſometimes we may find him alſo in a clean, contrary Diſguiſe, perhaps gallanting it with his Ladies; or drinking and roaring, and ſhaking his Elbow in a Tavern with ſome rich young Cully by his Side; who from his dull, ruſtick Converſe (as ſome will have it) is newly come to Town to ſee *Faſhions*, and *know Men*, (forſooth) and having newly buried his Father in the Country, to give his Eſtate a more honourable Burial in the City.

In ſhort, the Covetous Perſon puts on all Forms and Shapes, runs through all Trades and Profeſſions, haunts all Places, and makes himſelf expert in the Myſtery of all Vices, that he may the better pay his Devotions to his God *Mammon*. And ſo, in a quite different Way from that of the bleſſed Apoſtle, *he become all Things to all Men*, that he may by

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by *any Means gain ſomething*; for he cares not much for *gaining Perſons*, where he can gain *nothing* elſe.

4*thly* and *Laſtly*. *Covetouſneſs* implies in it a *Tenaciouſneſs* in keeping. Hitherto, we have ſeen it *filling* its Bags, and in this Property we find it *ſealing* them up. In the former, we have ſeen how eagerly it can *catch*, and in this latter, it ſhews us how faſt it can *gripe*. And we need no other Proof of the peculiar Baſeneſs of this Vice, than this. For as the prime, and more eſſential Property of Goodneſs, is to communicate and diffuſe itſelf: So, in the ſame Degree, that any Thing encloſes, and ſhuts up its Plenty within itſelf; in the ſame it recedes, and falls off from the Nature of *Good*. If we caſt our Eyes over the whole Creation, we ſhall find every Part of the Univerſe contributing ſomething or other, either to the Help or Ornament of the Whole. The great Buſineſs of Providence is to be continually iſſuing out freſh Supplies of the Divine Bounty to the Creature, which lives and ſubſiſts like a Lamp fed by continual Infuſions from the ſame Hand, which firſt lights and ſets it up. So that Covetouſneſs is nothing ſo much, as a grand Contradiction to Providence, while it terminates

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terminates wholly within itself. The covetous Person lives as if the World were made altogether for him, and not he for the World, to take in Every thing, and to part with Nothing. Charity is accounted no Grace with him, nor Gratitude any Vertue. The Cries of the Poor never enter into his Ears; or if they do, he has always one Ear readier to let them out, than the other to take them in. In a word, by his Rapines and Extortions, he is always for making as many poor as he can, but for relieving none, whom he either finds or makes so. So that it is a Question, Whether his Heart be *harder*, or his Fist closer. In a word, he is a Pest and a Monster: Greedier than the *Sea*, and Barrenner than the *Shore*. A Scandal to Religion, and an Exception from common Humanity; and upon no other Account fit to live in this World, but to be made an Example of God's Justice in the next.

Creditor and *Debtor* divide the World, and he who is not one, is certainly the other. But the covetous Wretch does not only shut his Hand to the Poor in point of *Relief*, but to others also in point of *Debt*. Upon which Account, the Apostle *James* upbraids the rich Men, in *Jam.* v. 4. *Behold*, says he, *the Hire*

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Hire of the Labourers who have reaped down your Fields, which of you is kept back, cryeth. Theſe, it ſeems, being the Men who allow neither Servants nor Workmen any other Wages, than (as the Saying is) their *Labour for their Pains.* Men, generally as the World goes, are too powerful to be juſt, and too rich to pay their Debts. For whatſoever they can borrow, they look upon as lawful Prize, and extremely deſpiſe and laugh at the Folly of Reſtitution. But well it is for the poor Orphan and the Oppreſſed, that there is a Court above, where the Cauſe of both will be infallibly recognized, and ſuch Devourers be forced to diſgorge the *Widow's Houſes* they had ſwallowed, and the moſt righteous Judge be ſure to pay thoſe their Due, who would never pay any elſe theirs.

The Truth is, the Covetous Perſon is ſo bad a Pay-Maſter, that he lives and dies as much a Debtor to himſelf, as to any one elſe: His own *Back* and *Belly* having an Action of Debt againſt him; while he pines, and pinches, and denies himſelf, not only in the Accommodations, but alſo in the very Neceſſities of Nature; with the greateſt Nonſenſe imaginable, living a *Beggar*, that he may die *rich*, and leave behind him a Maſs of

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of Money, valuable upon no other Account in the World, but as it is an Inſtrument to command and procure to a Man thoſe Conveniences of Life, which ſuch an one voluntarily, and by full Choice deprives himſelf of.

Nor does this Vice ſtop here, but, as I verily believe, one great Reaſon which keep ſome Perſons from the bleſſed Sacrament, may be reſolved into their *Covetouſneſs*. For God, in that Duty, certainly calls for a Remembrance of the Poor, and therefore there muſt be ſomething *offered*, as well as *received* by the worthy Communicant. But this the Covetous Wretch likes not, who perhaps could brook the Duty well enough, were it an Ordinance only for *receiving* and *taking in*; but ſince it requires alſo ſomething to be *parted with*, he flies from the *Altar*, as if he were to be *ſacrificed upon it*; and ſo, turning his Back upon his Saviour, chooſes rather to forget all the Benefits of his precious Death and Paſſion, than to caſt in his Portion into the Poor's Treaſury; a ſtrange Piece of good Husbandry certainly, for a Man thus to *loſe* his *Soul*, only to *ſave his Self*.

And thus much for the ſecond Thing conſiderable in the Dehortation; namely, the Thing

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Thing we are therein dehorted from, which is, that *mean, ſordid, and degrading Vice of Covetouſneſs.* The Nature of which I have been endeavouring to make out; both *Negatively*, by ſhewing, What it is not; and *Poſitively*, by ſhewing, What it is, and wherein it conſiſts. I proceed now to the

3*d* and laſt Thing to be conſidered in the *Dehortation.* Which is, the *Way* and *Means* whereby we are taught to avoid the Thing we are thus *dehorted* from. And that is, by uſing a conſtant Care and Vigilance againſt it. *Take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs.* Concerning which, we muſt obſerve, that as every Thing to be avoided, is properly an Evil or Miſchief; ſo ſuch an Evil, as is to be avoided by a ſingular, and more than ordinary Caution, is always attended with one or both of theſe two Qualifications.

1. An exceeding Aptneſs to prevail upon us.

2. An equal Difficulty in removing it, when it has once prevailed. In both which reſpects, we are eminently cautioned againſt Covetouſneſs. And firſt, We ſhall find, that it is a Vice marvellouſly apt to prevail upon, and inſinuate into the Heart of Man; and that upon theſe three Accounts.

1. The

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1. The near Reſemblance which it often bears to Vertue.

2. The Plauſibility of its Pleas and Pretences. And

3. The great Reputation which Riches generally give Men in the World, by whatſoever Ways or Means they were gotten. And

1. It inſinuates, by the near Reſemblance it bears to Vertue. Vertue and Vice dwell upon the Confines of each other; always moſt diſtant in their Natures, though the ſame too often in Appearance; like the Borderers of two Kingdoms or Countries, the greateſt *Enemies*, and yet the neareſt *Neighbours*. So that it muſt needs require no ſmall Accuracy of Judgment (and ſuch as few are Maſters of) to ſtate the juſt Limits of both, and a Man muſt go *nearer*, than the covetous Perſon himſelf, to hit the Dividing Point, and to ſhew exactly where the Vertue ends, and the Vice begins. A ſmall Accident or Circumſtance often changing the whole Quality of the Action, and of lawful or indifferent, rendring it culpable and unlawful. Covetouſneſs is confeſſedly a Vice, could we but know where to find it. But when it is confronted with *Prodigality*, it is ſo apt to take ſhelter

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ſhelter under the Name and Shew of *good Husbandry*, that it is hard to diſcern the Reality from the Pretence, and to repreſent Nature in its true Shape. *Parſimony* and *Saving*, determined by due Circumſtances, are, queſtionleſs, the Dictates of right Reaſon, and ſo far not allowable only, but commendable alſo. For ſurely there can be no Immorality in *ſparing*, where there is no Law whatſoever, that obliges a Man to *ſpend*. It is the common and received Voice of the World, that nothing can be more laudably got, than that which is lawfully ſaved. *Saving* (as I hinted before) being nothing elſe, but a due Valuation of the Favours of Providence, and a Fencing againſt one of the greateſt of Miſeries, *Poverty*; which, *Solomon* tells us, *comes like an armed Man* upon the Laviſh and the Prodigal, and when it comes, is of itſelf a Curſe, and a Temptation, and too often makes a Man as wicked, as he is poor. But ſuch is the Frailty of Humane Nature, and its great Proneneſs to Vice, that under the Maſk of Lawful Parſimony, that *Amor ſceleratus habendi*, Covetouſneſs inſenſibly ſteals upon, and gets Poſſeſſion of the Soul, and the Man is entangled and enſlaved, and brought under the Power of an ill Habit, before he is

ſo

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ſo much as alarmed with its firſt Approaches; and ready to be carried off by the Plague, or ſome mortal *Diſtemper*, before he is aware of the Infection. But

2. Covetouſneſs is apt to inſinuate alſo, by the Plauſibility of its Pleas. Amongſt which, none more uſual and general, than the Neceſſity of *providing for Children and Poſterity*; whom (all will grant) Parents ſhould not be inſtrumental to bring into the World, only to ſee them ſtarve when they are here. Nor are juſt the Neceſſities of a bare Subſiſtence to be the only Meaſure of their Care for them; but ſome Conſideration is to be had alſo of the Quality and Condition to which they were born, and conſequently were brought into, not by *Choice*, but by *Deſcent*. For it ſeems not * ſuitable to the common, and moſt impartial Judgment of Mankind, *That one* of a Noble Family and Extraction ſhould be put to Hedging and Ditching, and be forced to ſupport himſelf with the Labour of his Hands,

* *But much different was the Advice of a certain Lawyer, a great Confident of the Rebels in the Time of their Reign; who, upon a Conſult held amongſt them, how to diſpoſe of the Duke of* Glouceſter, *youngeſt Son of King* Charles *the Firſt, then in their Hands; with great Gravity (forſooth) declared it for his Opinion,* That they ſhould bind him out to ſome good Trade, that ſo he might eat his Bread honeſt-

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Hands, and the *Sweat* of his Brow. 'Tis hard Meaſure to be nobly Born, and baſely Endowed; to wear a Title above one's Circumſtances, and ſo ſerve only as a Foil to an Elder Brother. But now, by ſuch Proviſions for Poſterity, the Reaſon and Meaſure of Mens Gains, from Perſonal is like to grow Infinite and Perpetual; and yet no Charge of Covetouſneſs ſeems here able to take Place; it being impoſſible for a Man to be *covetous* in that, in which no Getting can be ſuperfluous. The firſt Plea of Avarice therefore is, *Proviſion for Poſterity.*

ly. *Theſe were his Words, and very extraordinary ones they were indeed. Nevertheleſs, they could not hinder him from being made a Judge in the Reign of King* Charles *the Second. A Practice not unuſual in the Courts of ſome Princes, to encourage and preferr their mortal Enemies before their trueſt Friends.*

But then, if a Man's Condition be ſuch, that all his Cares are to terminate in his own Perſon, and that he has neither Sons nor Daughters to lay up for, but that his whole Family lives and dies with him, and one *Grave* is to receive them all, why then Covetouſneſs will urge to him the Neceſſity of hoarding up againſt Old Age, againſt the Days of Weakneſs and Infirmity, when the Strength of his Body, and the Vigour of his Mind ſhall fail him, and when the World

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ſhall meaſure out their Friendſhips and Reſpects to him, only according to the Dimenſions of his Purſe. Upon which Account, one would think, that all a Man's Gettings and Hoardings up, during his Youth, ought to paſs but for Charity and Compaſſion to his Old Age; which muſt either live and ſubſiſt upon the Stock of former Acquiſitions, or expect all that Miſery, which *Want*, added to *Weakneſs*, can bring upon it. The Sight of an old Man, poor and deſtitute, crazy and ſcorned, unable to help himſelf, or to *buy* the Help of others, is a ſhrewd Argument to recommend Covetouſneſs to one, even in his greeneſt Years, and to make the very youngeſt and jollyeſt Sparks, in their moſt flouriſhing Age, look about them. It having been the Obſervation and Judgment of ſome, who have wanted neither Wiſdom nor Experience, *That an old Man has no Friend but his Money.* And I heartily wiſh I could confute the Obſervation.

But the like, and no leſs plauſible a Plea will this Vice alſo put in for providing againſt *Times of Perſecution*, or Publick Calamity; calling to a Man's Mind all the Hardſhips of a Civil War, all the Plunders and Rapines, when nothing was ſafe above Ground; but a

Man

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Man was forced to *bury his Bags*, to keep himself *alive*. And therefore, though, at present, there should be Peace, and all about us calm and quiet, yet who knows, how soon a Storm may arise, and the Spirit of *Rebellion* and *Fanaticism* put it into Mens Heads once more to raise Armies to plunder, and cut Throats *in the Lord*; and then, believe it, when the *great Work* shall be thus carrying on, and we shall see our Friends and our Neighbours *reformed* out of House and Home as formerly, it will be found worth while to have secured a friendly Penny in a Corner, which may bid us eat, when we should otherwise starve, and speak Comfort to us, when our Friends will not so much as know us.

With these, and such-like Reasonings, fallaciously applyed, will Covetousness persuade a Man, both of the Necessity and Lawfulness of his raising Heap upon Heap, and joining House to House, and putting no Bounds to his Gains, when his Hand is once in. And it must be confessed, that there is some Shew of Reason for what has been alledged; but when again, we shall consider, that the forementioned Cases are all but future Contingencies, which are by no means to be the

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Rule of Mens Actions, our Duty is only to look to the Precept, and the Obligation of it, which is plain and preſent, and may be eaſily known; and for the reſt, to commit ourſelves to the good Providence of God. For while we are ſollicitouſly providing againſt the Miſeries of Age and Perſecution, how do we know, whether we ſhall ever live to be old? Or to ſee the Calamity of our Country? Or the Perſecution of our Perſons? But however, if God ſhall ſee it for his Honour to try and humble us with the Miſeries of any of theſe Conditions, it is not all our Art and Labour, all our Parſimony and Providence, which can prevent them. And therefore, how plauſible ſoever the Pleas of Covetouſneſs may ſeem, they are far from being rational. But

3*dly* and *Laſtly*. Covetouſneſs is apt to prevail upon the Minds of Men, by reaſon of the *Reputation* which Riches generally give Men in the World, by whatſoever Ways or Means they were gotten. It is a very great, though ſad and ſcandalous Truth, that *rich* Men are at the very ſame Time eſteemed and honoured, while the Ways, by which they grew rich, are abhorred and deteſted: For how is Griping and Avarice exclaimed againſt?

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gainſt? How is Oppreſſion branded all the World over? All Mankind ſeems agreed to run them down; and yet, what Addreſſes are made, what Reſpects ſhewn, what high Encomiums given to a wealthy Miſer, to a rich and flouriſhing Oppreſſor? The lucky Effect ſeems to have attoned for, and ſanctified its vile Cauſe; and the baſeſt Thing covered with Gold, lies hid itſelf, and ſhines with the Luſtre of its Covering.

Vertue, Charity, and Generoſity are indeed ſplendid Names, and look bright in Sermons and Panegyricks, (which few regard:) But when we come to Practice, and common Life, Vertue, if poor, is but a ſneaking Thing, looked upon diſdainfully, and treated coldly; and when *Charity* brings a Man to need *Charity*, he muſt be content with the Scraps from the Table of the rich Miſer, or the great Oppreſſor. For no Invitations are now made, like that in the Goſpel, where Meſſengers are ſent, with Tickets, to bring in Gueſts *from the Hedges and High Ways*. No; it is not the Way in our Days to ſpread Tables, or furniſh out Banquets for the Poor and the Blind, the Hungry and the Indigent. For in our Times, (to the juſt Shame of the *Fops our Anceſtors*, as ſome call them) full

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Bellies are ſtill ofteneſt feaſted; *and to them who have ſhall be given, and they ſhall have more abundantly.* This is the Way of the World; be the Diſcourſe of it, what it will. And as this is the general Practice of the World, ſo it muſt needs be the general Obſervation of the World too; for while Men reproach *Vice*, and careſs the *Vicious*; upbraid the *Guilt* of an Action, but adore its *Succeſs*; they muſt not think, that all about them are ſo without Eyes, or common Senſe, as not to ſpy out the Prevarication, and to take an Eſtimate of their real Value of Things and Perſons, rather by what *they do*, than by what they *talk*. Since therefore, it is ſo natural for every one to deſire to live with as good Eſteem and Reputation in the World as he can, it is no wonder, if Covetouſneſs makes ſo ſtrong a Plea for itſelf in the Hearts of Men, by promiſing them Riches, which they find ſo certain a Way to Honour and Reſpect. And thus much for the firſt General Reaſon of the *Caution*, given by our Saviour, againſt Covetouſneſs; namely, *Its great Aptneſs to prevail upon, and inſinuate into Mens Minds.*

2. The other General Reaſon, is, the exceeding great Difficulty of removing it, when it

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it has once prevailed. In which, and the like Cases, one would think it Argument sufficient to caution any Man against a Disease, if we can but convince him of the great Likelihood of his falling into it; and not only of that, but, in case he should fall into it, of the extreme Difficulty (sometimes next to an Impossibility) of his recovering, and getting out of it. Both which Considerations together, certainly should add something more than ordinary to the Caution of every Wise Man, and make him double his Guards against so threatning a Mischief. And as for Covetousness, we may truly say of it, that it makes both the *Alpha* and *Omega* in the Devil's Alphabet, and that it is the first Vice in corrupt Nature *which moves*, and the last *which dies*. For look upon any Infant, and as soon as it can but move an Hand, we shall see it reaching out after something or other, which it should not have; and he, who does not know it to be the proper and peculiar Sin of Old Age, seems himself to have the Dotage of that Age upon him, whether he has the Years or no. For, who so intent upon the World commonly as those, who are just going out of it? Who so diligent in heaping up Wealth, as those

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who have neither Will nor Time to ſpend it?

If we ſhould inſiſt upon the Reaſon of Things, nothing ſeems more a Prodigy, than to obſerve, how catching and griping thoſe are, who are utterly void of all Power and Capacity of enjoying any of theſe Things which they ſo eagerly catch at. All which ſhews, how faſt this Vice rivets itſelf into the Heart, which it once gets hold of; how it even grows into a Part of Nature, and ſcarce ever leaves the Man, who has been enſlaved by it, till he leaves the World.

Now, if we enquire into the Reaſon of the difficult Removal of this Vice, we ſhall find, that all thoſe Cauſes, which promoted its firſt Inſinuation and Entrance into Mens Affections, contribute alſo to its Settlement and Continuance in the ſame; as the ſame Sword which enables to conquer, enables alſo to reign and rule after the Conqueſt. *Covetouſneſs*, we ſhew, prevailed by its Likeneſs and *Reſemblance* to Vertue, by the *Plauſibility* of its Pleas, and by the *Reputation* of its Effects. All which, as they were ſo many Arguments to the Soul, firſt to admit, and take in the Vice, ſo they are as potent Perſuaſives not to part with it. But the grand Reaſon, I conceive,

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conceive, which ties the Knot ſo faſt, that it is hardly to be untied, is this: That Covetouſneſs is founded upon that great and predominant Principle of Nature, which is *Self-Preſervation*. It is indeed an ill-built *Superſtructure*, but yet it is raiſed upon that lawful, and moſt allowed Foundation. The prime and main Deſign of Nature, whether in Things *animate* or *inanimate*, being to preſerve or defend itſelf; which ſince it cannot do, but by taking in Relief and Succour from Things without, and ſince this Deſire is ſo very eager and tranſporting, it eaſily overſhoots in the Meaſure of what it takes in, and thereby incurs the Sin, and contracts the Guilt of Covetouſneſs; which is properly an 'Immoderate Deſire, and Purſuit of even the 'lawful Helps and Supports of Nature.

Men dread *Want*, *Miſery*, and *Contempt*, and therefore think, they can never be enough provided with the Means of keeping off theſe Evils. So that, if *Want*, *Miſery*, and *Contempt* were not manifeſtly Enemies to, and Deſtructive of the Enjoyments of Nature; and Nature were not infinitely concerned to ſecure and make good theſe Enjoyments; and Riches, and Plenty were not thought the direct Inſtruments to effect this; there could be

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no ſuch Thing as Covetouſneſs in the World. But even Money (*the Deſire of all Nations*) would ſink in its Value, and Gold itſelf loſe its *Weight*, though it kept its *Luſtre*. For to what rational Purpoſe ſhould Men proll and labour for that, without which Nature could continue in its full, entire Fruition of whatſoever was either needful for its Support, or deſirable for its Pleaſure? But it is evident, that Men live and act under this Perſuaſion, that unleſs they have Wealth and Plenty enough, they ſhall be needy, miſerable, and deſpiſed, and that the Way to have enough, is to let nothing (if poſſible) go beſide them. So that herein lies the *Strength* of *Covetouſneſs*, that it acts in the *Strength* of *Nature*, that it ſtrikes in with its firſt and moſt forcible *Inclination*; which is to ſecure itſelf, both in the *Good* it actually *has*, and againſt the *Evil it fears*.

In ſhort therefore, to recapitulate the foregoing Particulars. If Caution and Vigilance be ever neceſſary for the Prevention of any Evil, it muſt be of ſuch an one as inſinuates itſelf eaſily, grows upon a Man inſenſibly, and ſticks to him immovably; and in a word, ſcarce ever loſes its Hold, where it has once got it. So that a Man muſt be continually watching

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watching and fencing againſt it, or he ſhall be ſure to fall by it.

And thus much for the firſt General Part of the Text; to wit, the Dehortation from *Covetouſneſs*, expreſſed in theſe Words, *Take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs.* A Vice, which no Character can reach the Compaſs, or fully expreſs the Baſeneſs of, holding faſt all it can get in one Hand, and reaching at all it can deſire with the other; a Vice which may but too ſignificantly be called the * Βελιμία, or *Appetitus Caninus* of the Soul, perpetually diſpoſing it to a Courſe of alternate *Craving* and *Swallowing*, and *Swallowing* and *Craving*; and which nothing can cure, or put an end to, but that which puts an end to the Man himſelf too. In a word, of ſo killing a Malignity is it, that whereſoever it ſettles, it may be deſervedly ſaid of it; that if it has enriched *its Thouſands*, it has *damned its ten Thouſands.* An hard Saying, I confeſs; but it is the *Truth of it*, which makes it ſo. And therefore happy, no doubt, is that Man, who maturely takes the Warning which our Saviour ſo favourably gives him; and by ſhunning the Contagion of a Vice ſo peculiarly

* Viz. *Inſatiabilis edendi cupiditas; ſive morbus, quo laborantes, etiam poſt cibum eſuriunt.* Tuſanus.

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peculiarly branded and declared againſt, neither contracts the Guilt, nor comes within the Number of thoſe, whom God himſelf, in *Pſal.* x. 3. expreſly tells us, *he abhorrs.*

To which God (*who ſo graciouſly* warns *us here, that he may not* condemn *us hereafter*) *be rendred and aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Praiſe, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore.* Amen.

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Covetouſneſs proved no leſs an Abſurdity in Reaſon, than a Contradiction to Religion, nor a more unſure Way to Riches, than Riches themſelves to Happineſs.

PART II.

LUKE xii. 15.

And he ſaid unto them, take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs; for a Man's Life conſiſteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth.

WHEN I entred upon the Proſecution of theſe Words, I obſerved in them theſe two General Parts.

Firſt, A *Dehortation*, or Diſſuaſive from Covetouſneſs in theſe Words; *Take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs.*

Secondly,

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Secondly, A *Reason* enforcing it, and joining the latter Part of the Text with the former, by the causal Particle [*For*] *For a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth.*

As for the first of these Two, *viz.* The *Dehortation, or Dissuasion from Covetousness*; I have already dispatched that in a Discourse by itself, and so proceed now to the

2*d* General Part, to wit, the *Reason* enforcing the said *Dehortation*, and expressed in these Words, *For a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth.*

In the foregoing Discourse, I shew, that these Words were an Answer of our Saviour, to a tacit Argumentation formed in the Minds of most Men, in the behalf of Covetousness; which grounding itself upon that Universal Principle, *That all Men* desire to make their Life in this World as happy as they can, proceeded to the main Conclusion, by these two Steps; to wit, that *Riches* were the direct and proper Means to acquire this *Happiness*; and Covetousness the proper Way to get and obtain *Riches*.

The

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The Ground of which Arguments; namely, *That* every Man may design to himself as much Happiness in this Life, as by all lawful Means he can compass, our Saviour allows, and contradicts not in the least; as being indeed the first, and most native Result of those Principles, which every Man brings into the World with him. But as for the two Consequences drawn from thence; the first of them, *viz. That Riches were the direct and proper Means to acquire Happiness*, our Saviour denies, as *absolutely false*; and the second, *viz. That Covetousness is the proper Way to obtain Riches*, he does by no means allow for *certainly true*; though he does not, I confess, directly set himself to disprove it here; but in the Text now before us, insists only upon the Falshood of the former Consequence, as we, in the following Discourse, shall likewise do; though even the latter of these Consequences also shall not be passed over in its due Place.

Accordingly, our Saviour here makes it the chief, if not sole Business of his present Sermon (and that in Defiance of the common Sentiments of the World) to demonstrate the Inability of Riches for the Attainment of true Happiness, and thereby to make good

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good the grand Point inſiſted upon, *viz. That a Man's Life conſiſteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth.* Where, by [*Life*] I ſuppoſe, there can be no need of proving, *that our Saviour does not here mean* [*Life*] barely and phyſically ſo taken, and no more; which is but a poor Thing, God knows; but by *Life* according to a Metonymy of the *Subject*, for the *Adjunct* underſtands *the Happineſs of Life*, in the very ſame Senſe, wherein St. *Paul* takes this Word in 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 8. *Now* (ſays he) *we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord.* That is, we live with Comfort, and a ſatisfactory Enjoyment of ourſelves. And conformable to the ſame, is the Way of Speaking in the *Latin*, as *Iſtuc eſt vivere*, and *Non eſt vivere, ſed valere vita.* In which, and many the like Expreſſions, *Vivere* and *vita* import not the meer phyſical Act of Living; but the Pleaſure, Happineſs, and Accommodations of Life; without which, Life itſelf is ſcarce worthy to be accounted Life; but only a Power of breathing, and a Capacity of being miſerable.

Now, that Riches, Wealth, and Abundance, (the Things which ſwell ſo big in the Fancies of Men, (promiſing them *Mountains*, but producing only a *Mouſe*) are not,

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as they perſuade themſelves, ſuch ſure, unfailing Cauſes of that Felicity, which the grand Deſires of their Nature ſo eagerly preſs after, will appear from theſe following Conſiderations.

1*ſt*, That no Man, generally ſpeaking, acquires, or takes Poſſeſſion of the Riches of this World, but with great Toil and Labour, and that very frequently even to the utmoſt Fatigue. The firſt and leading *Curſe*, which God pronounced upon Mankind in *Adam*, was, That *in the Sweat of his Brows he ſhould eat his Bread*, Gen. iii. 19. And if it be a Curſe for a Man to be forced to toil for his very Bread; that is, for the moſt neceſſary Support of Life; how does he heighten and multiply the Curſe upon himſelf, who toils for Superfluities, and ſpends his Time and Strength in hoarding up that, which he has no real Need of; and which, it is ten to one, but he may never have any Occaſion for. For ſo is all that Wealth, which exceeds ſuch a Competence, as anſwers the preſent Occaſions and Wants of Nature. And when God comes to account with us, (let our own Meaſures be what they will) he will conſider no more.

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Now certain it is, that the general, ſtated Way of gathering Riches, muſt be by *Labour and Travail*, by ſerving other Mens Needs, and proſecuting their Buſineſs, and thereby doing our own. For there is a general Commutation of theſe Two, which circulates, and goes about the World, and governs all the Affairs of it; one Man's *Labour* being the ſtated Price of another Man's *Money*; that is to ſay, Let my Neighbour help me with his Art, Skill, or Strength, and I will help him in Proportion with what I poſſeſs. And this is the Original Cauſe and Reaſon, why Riches come not without Toil and Labour, and a Man's exhauſting himſelf to fill his Purſe. This, I ſay, is the Original Cauſe; for I know, that, the World being once ſettled, Eſtates come to be tranſmitted to many by Inheritance; and ſuch need nothing elſe to render them wealthy, but only to be born into the World. Sometimes alſo, Riches fall into Mens Hands by Favour or Fortune; but this is but ſeldom, and thoſe, who are thus the Favourites of Providence, make but a ſmall Number, in compariſon of thoſe, who get what they have by Dint of Labour, and ſevere Travail. And therefore, (as I ſaid at firſt) this is the

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common, ſtated Way, which Providence allows Men to grow rich by.

But now, can any Man reconcile temporal Happineſs to perpetual Toil? Or can he enjoy any Thing truly, who never enjoys his Eaſe? I mean, that lawful Eaſe, which God allows, and Nature calls for, upon the Viciſſitudes of Reſt and Labour. But he, who will be vaſtly rich, muſt bid adieu to his Reſt, and reſolve to be a Slave, and a Drudge all his Days. And at laſt, when his Time is ſpent in heaping up, and the Heap is grown big, and calls upon the Man to enjoy it, his Years of Enjoyment are paſt, and he muſt quit the World, and die like a Fool, only to leave his Son, or his Heir a rich Man; who perhaps will be one of the firſt, who ſhall laugh at him for what he left him, and complain, if not alſo curſe him, for having left him no more. For ſuch Things have happened in the World; and I do not find, that the World much mends upon our Hands. But if this be the Way of it, (as we ſee it is) what Happineſs a Man can reap from hence, even upon a temporal Account, needs a more than ordinary Invention to find out. The Truth is, the Abſurdity of the Practice is ſo very groſs, that it ſeems to carry in it a direct

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Contrariety to thoſe common Notions and Maxims, *which Nature would* govern the Actions of Mankind by.

2. Men are uſually forced to encounter, and paſs through very *great Dangers*, before they can attain to any conſiderable Degrees of Wealth. And no Man, ſurely, can rationally account himſelf happy in the midſt *of Danger*. For while he walks upon the very Edge and Brink of Ruin; it is but an equal Caſt, whether he ſhall ſucceed or ſink, live or die, in the Attempt he makes. He, who (for inſtance) deſigns to raiſe his Fortunes by Merchandize, (as a great Part of the World does) muſt have all his Hopes floating upon the Waves, and his Riches (the whole Support of his Heart) entirely at the Mercy of Things which have no Mercy, the *Seas* and the *Winds*. A ſudden Storm may beggar him; and who can ſecure him from a Storm in the Place of Storms? A Place, where whole Eſtates are every Day ſwallowed up, and which has thereby made it diſputable, whether there are more Millions of Gold and Silver *lodged below the Salt Waters*, or above them; ſo that, in the ſame Degree, that any Man of Senſe deſires Wealth, he muſt of Neceſſity fear its Loſs; his *Deſires*

muſt

muſt ſtill meaſure out his *Fears*; and both of them, with reference to the ſame Objects, muſt bear Proportion to one another; which, in the mean time, muſt needs make the Man really miſerable; by being thus held in a continual Diſtraction between two very uneaſy Paſſions. Nevertheleſs, let us, after all, ſuppoſe, that this Man of Traffick, having paſſed the beſt of his Days in Fears and Dangers, comes at length to triumph ſo far over both, as to bring off a good Eſtate from the Mouth of the devouring Element, and now thinks to ſit down, and ſolace his Old Age with the Acquiſitions of his younger, and more daring Years; let him, however, put what is *paſt*, and what is *preſent* into the ſame Balance, and judge impartially, whether the preſent Enjoyment, which he reaps from the Quiet and Plenty of this poor Remainder of his Age, (if he reaps any) can equal thoſe perpetual Fears and Agonies, which not only anticipated, and brought Age upon him before its Time, but likewiſe, by a continual racking Sollicitude of Thought, cut him off from all Pleaſure in the proper Days of Pleaſure, and from thoſe youthful Satisfactions, which Age muſt by no means pretend to. *I am this Day* fourſcore Years old (ſaid the

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aged and rich *Barzillai*) in 2 *Sam.* xix. 35. *and can I yet taſte what I eat, or what I drink?* But (it ſeems) as dull as his Senſes were, he was ſeverely ſenſible of the Truth of what he ſaid. And whoſoever lives to *Barzillai*'s Years, ſhall not with all *Barzillai*'s Wealth and Greatneſs (ſufficient, as we read, to entertain a King and his Army) be able to procure himſelf a quicker, and a better Reliſh of what ſhall be ſet before him, than *Barzillai* had. For all Enjoyment muſt needs be at an end, where the *Powers* of enjoying ceaſe. And if, in the next place, we ſhould paſs from the Delicacies of Fare to the Splendor of Habit, (another Thing which moſt of the World are ſo much taken with) What could the Purple, and the Scarlet, and all the Fineries of Cloathing avail a Man, when the Wearer himſelf was grown *out of Faſhion?* In a word, every Man muſt be reckoned to have juſt ſo much of the World, as he enjoys of it. And the Covetous Man (we have ſhewn) *will not*, and the old Man *cannot* enjoy it.

But ſome again, (the natural Violence of their Temper ſo diſpoſing them) are for advancing, and enriching themſelves (if poſſible) by War: A Courſe certainly, of all others,

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others, the most unaccountable and preposterous. For is it not highly irrational, for a Man to sacrifice the *End* to the *Means?* To hazard his Life for the Pursuit of that, which, for the Sake and Support of Life only, can be valuable? Well indeed may the Man, who has been bred up in, and accustomed to Camps, Battles, and Sieges, *look Death and Danger boldly in the Face*; but yet, let him not think to *look them out of Countenance too*; these being Evils, no doubt, too great for Mortality, with but common Sense and Reason about it, to *defy*. Nay, suppose we likewise, the *Man of Arms* so fortunate, as, in his Time, to have fought himself into an Estate, (as several such have done) yet may not, even this also, prove a very slight and contemptible *Purchase*, if, as soon as it is made, the Man himself should drop out of this World, and so become wholly uncapable of taking *Possession* of what he had bought with his *Life*, but only by his *Grave?*

Thus, I say, it often fares with those *Soldiers of Fortune*, or *Field-Adventurers*, (as we may call them) from whom, if we cast our Eye a little further, upon another Sort of Men, no less eager after Gain and Grandeur from their Management of State-Af-

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fairs; ſhall we find their Condition at all more ſecure? Their Happineſs more firmly fixed? And leſs at a Venture; than that of thoſe of the forementioned Tribe? No ſurely, no leſs Hazards meet the Stateſman at the *Council-Board*, than accoſt the Soldier in the *Field*; and one had need be as good a *Fencer*, as the other ought to be a *Fighter*, to defend himſelf: The Oppoſitions he is to conteſt with, being altogether as terrible and fatal, though not in the ſame Dreſs. For he has the changeable Will of his Prince or Superiors, the Competition of his Equals, and the popular Rage of his Inferiors, to guard and ſecure himſelf againſt. And he muſt walk with a wary Eye, and a ſteady Foot indeed, who never trips nor ſtumbles at any of theſe *croſs Blocks*, which, ſome Time or other, will aſſ. edly be caſt before him; and it is well, if he carries not only his Foot, but *his Head too, ſo ſure*, as to fall by neither of them; many wiſe Men, I am ſure, have fallen ſo. For it is not *Wiſdom*, but *Fortune* which muſt protect ſuch an one; and *Fortune* is no Man's *Freehold*, either to keep, or to command.

Which being truly his Caſe, I cannot judge that Man happy, who is in Danger to be ruined

ruined every Moment, and who can neither bring the Cauſes of his Ruin within the Reach of his Proſpect, nor the Avoidance of them within the Compaſs of his Power; but notwithſtanding all his Art, Wit, and Cunning, lies perpetually open to a thouſand *inviſible*, and, upon that Account, *inevitable* Miſchiefs. And thus I have ſhewn the Dangers which attend the ſeveral Ways and Paſſages, by which Men aſpire to Wealth and Greatneſs; the Things upon which the abuſed Reaſon of Mankind ſo much doats, and in which it places *ſo much Felicity*, and finds ſo *little*. But

3. Men are frequently forced to make their Way to great Poſſeſſions, by the *Commiſſion of great Sins*, and therefore, the Happineſs of Life cannot poſſibly conſiſt in them. It has been a Saying, and a remarkable one it is, *That there is no Man very rich, but is either an unjuſt Perſon himſelf, or the Heir of one or other, who was ſo.* I dare not pronounce ſo ſevere a Sentence univerſally: For I queſtion not, but through the good Providence of God, ſome are as innocently, and with as good a Conſcience rich, as others can be poor: But the general Buſineſs and Corruption of Mens Practices has verified this harſh Saying

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Saying of too many; and it is every Day ſeen, how many ſerve the *God* of this World, to obtain the *Riches* of it. 'Tis true, the full Reward of a Man's unjuſt Dealing never reaches him in this Life; but if he has not ſinned away all the Senſe, Tenderneſs, and Apprehenſiveneſs of his Conſcience, the Grudges and Regrets of it will be ſtill like *Death in the Pot*, and give a ſad grumbling Allay to all his Comforts; nor ſhall his Heart ever find any entire, clear, unmixed Content in the Wealth he has got, when he ſhall reflect upon the Manner of his getting it; and aſſure him, that nothing of all that, which he poſſeſſes in the World, is yet *paid for*; ſo that, if the Juſtice of God ſhould exact his Soul in Payment of that vaſt Score, which his ſinful Gains have run him into, when this ſad Debt came once to be cleared off, who then would be the Gainer? Or what could *be got*, when the Soul *was loſt?*

One Man, perhaps, has been an Oppreſſor, and an Extortioner, and waded to all his Wealth through the *Tears* of Widows and Orphans. Another with Blood and Perjury, Falſhood and Lying, has borne down all before him, and now lords it in the midſt of a great Eſtate; and the like may be ſaid of others,

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others, who, by other Kinds of Baſeneſs, have done the ſame. But now, can any of theſe thriving Miſcreants be eſteemed, or called happy in ſuch a Condition? Is their Mind clear, their Conſcience calm and quiet, and their Thoughts generally undiſturbed? For there can be no true Happineſs, unleſs they are ſo; foraſmuch as all Happineſs muſt paſs through the Mind, and the Apprehenſion. But God has not left himſelf ſo without Witneſs, even in the Hearts of the moſt profligate Sinners, as to ſuffer *great Guilt*, and *profound Peace* to cohabit in the ſame Breaſt. *Jonah* muſt not think to diſobey, and then to ſleep ſecurely, and unmoleſted. No, the Storm will quickly be about his Ears, and the terrible Remembrancer within will be rubbing up old Stories, and breaking in upon his falſe Repoſe with ſecret Intimations of an impending Wrath. So that, if the Tempter, at any Time, be at one Elbow, to induce a Man to ſin; Conſcience will not fail to be jogging him at the other, to remind him what he has done, and what he is to expect thereupon. This has been the Caſe of the moſt proſperous Sinners in the World; theſe Remorſes and Fore-Bodings have ſtuck cloſe to them in the midſt of all their Plenty, Power, and

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and Splendor; a ſufficient Demonſtration doubtleſs, how thin and counterfeit all the Joys of theſe Grandees are, in ſpite of all the Flouriſhes, and fine Shows they make in the Opinion of the fooliſh World, which ſees and gazes upon their gliſtring Outſide, but knows not the diſmal Stings, and ſecret Laſhes which they feel within.

And thus much for the firſt General Argument, proving, That true Happineſs conſiſts not in any Earthly Abundance taken from the Conſideration of thoſe Evils, through which Men commonly paſs into the Poſſeſſion of it. The

2*d* General Argument ſhall be taken from the Conſideration of ſuch Evils as attend Men, when they come to be actually poſſeſſed of this Abundance. As

1. Exceſſive, immoderate Cares. The very Management of a great Eſtate, is a greater and more perplexing Trouble, than any that a poor Man can be ſubject to. Great Riches ſuper-induce new Neceſſities; Neceſſities added to thoſe of Nature, but accounted much above them; to wit, the Neceſſities of Pomp, Grandeur, and a ſuitable Port in the World. For he, who is vaſtly rich, muſt live like one who is ſo; and whoſoever does that, makes himſelf

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himſelf thereby a *great Hoſt*, and his Houſe a *great Inn*; where the Noiſe, the Trouble, and the Charge is ſure to be his, but the Enjoyment (if there be any) deſcends upon the Perſons entertained by him; nay, and upon the very Servants of his Family, whoſe Buſineſs is only to pleaſe their Maſter, and live upon him, while the Maſter's Buſineſs is to pleaſe all that come about him, and ſometimes to fence againſt them too. For a *Gainer* by all his Coſts and Charges, by all that he can give or ſpend, he ſhall never be. Such being the Temper of moſt Men in the World, that though they are never ſo kindly uſed, and ſo generouſly entertained, yet they are not to be *obliged*; but go away, rather *envying* their Entertainer's *Greatneſs*, than *acknowledging his Generoſity*. So that a Man, by widening or enlarging his Condition, only affords the Malicious World about him, ſo many more Handles to lay hold of him by, than it had before. It is indeed impoſſible, that Riches ſhould increaſe; and that Care, with many malign Accidents beſides, ſhould not increaſe with them. This is the dark Shadow, which ſtill follows thoſe ſhining Bodies. And Care is certainly one of the greateſt Miſeries of the Mind; the Toil, and very

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very Day-Labour of the Soul. And what Felicity, what Enjoyment can there be in unceſſant Labour? For Enjoyment is properly *attractive*, but Labour *expenſive*. And all Pleaſure adds, and takes in ſomething to the Stores of Nature; while Work and Labour is ſtill upon the exporting, and the ſpending Hand: Care is a conſuming, and a devouring Thing, and with a Kind of ſpiteful, as well as craving Appetite, preys upon the beſt and nobleſt Things of a Man, and is not to be put off with any of the Dainties of his full Table: But his Thoughts, his Natural Reſt and Recreations are the Viands, which his Cares feed upon. And is not that wealthy great one, think we, very happy, whoſe Riches ſhall force him to lie awake, while his very Porter is aſleep? And whoſe Greatneſs ſhall hardly allow him ſo much as Time to eat? Certainly, ſuch an one ſuſtains all the real Miſeries of Want, no leſs than he who ſeeks his Meat from Door to Door. For he is as much *ſtarved*, who cannot find *when*, as he who cannot find *what to eat*; and he dies as ſurely, who is preſſed to Death with Heaps of Gold and Silver, as he who is cruſhed under an Heap of Stones or Dirt. The Malignity, and corroding Quality of Care

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is, to all Intents and Purpoſes of Miſchief, the ſame, be the Cauſes of it never ſo different. And whether Poverty or Riches produce the Vexation, the Impreſſion it makes upon the Heart, is alike from both. *They who will be rich*, ſays St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 10. *pierce themſelves through with many Sorrows*; and thoſe (it ſeems) Sorrows not of the lighter, and more tranſient Sort, which give the Mind but feeble Touches, and ſhort Viſits, and quickly go off again; but they are ſuch, as ſtrike Daggers into it; ſuch as enter into the innermoſt Parts and Powers of it; and in a word, pierce it *through* and *through*, and draw out the very Life and Spirit through the Wound they make. Theſe are the peculiar and extraordinary *Sorrows* which *go before, accompany, and follow* Riches: And there is no Man, though in never ſo low a *Station*, who ſets his Heart upon growing rich, but ſhall in his Proportion, be ſure to have his Share of them. But then, let us caſt our Eye upon the higheſt Condition of Wealth and Abundance, which this World affords; to wit, the Royal Eſtate of Princes: Yet neither can this be truly eſteemed an Eſtate of Happineſs and Fruition; but as much advanced, above all other Conditions, in

Care

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Care and Anxiety, as it is in Power and Dignity. The greateſt, and the richeſt Prince can have but the Enjoyment of *one Man*; but he ſuſtains the united Cares and Concerns of as many Millions, as he commands. The Troubles of the whole Nation concenter in the Throne, and lodge themſelves in the Royal Diadem. So that it may, in effect, be but too truly ſaid of every Prince, that he wears *a Crown of Thorns* together with his *purple Robe*, (as the greateſt of Princes once did) and that his Throne is nothing elſe, but the *Seat Imperial* of Care. But

2. *The ſecond Evil* which attends the Poſſeſſion of Riches, is an inſatiable Deſire of getting more, *Eccleſ.* v. 9. *He who loves Money, ſhall not be ſatisfied with it*, ſays *Solomon*. And, I believe, it would be no hard Matter to aſſign more Inſtances of *ſuch as Riches have made covetous*, than of ſuch as *Covetouſneſs has made rich*. Upon which Account, a Man can never truly enjoy what he actually *has*, through the eager Purſuit of what he *has not*; his Heart is ſtill running out; ſtill upon the Chace of a new Game, and ſo never thinks of uſing what it has already acquired. And muſt it not now be one of the greateſt Miſeries, for a Man to

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have a perpetual Hunger upon him, and to have his Appetite grow fiercer and sharper amidst the very Objects and Opportunities of Satisfaction? Yet so it is usually with Men hugely rich. They have, and they covet; Riches flow in upon them, and yet Riches are the only Things they are still looking after. Their Desires are answered, and while they are answered, they are enlarged; they grow wider and stronger, and bring such a Dropsy upon the Soul, that the more it takes in, the more it may; just like some Drunkards, who even drink themselves athirst, and have no Reason in the World for their drinking more, but their having drank too much already.

There cannot be a greater Plague, than to be always baited with the Importunities of a growing Appetite. Beggars are troublesome, even in the Streets, as we pass through them; but how much more, when a Man shall carry a perpetually clamorous Beggar in his own Breast, which shall never leave off crying, *Give, give*, whether the Man has any Thing to give or no? Such an one, though never so rich, is like a Man with a numerous Charge of Children, with a great many hungry Mouths about him to be fed, and little or

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nothing to feed them with. For he creates to himself a Kind of new Nature, by bringing himself under the Power of new Necessities and Desires. Whereas Nature considered in itself, and, as true to its own Rules, is contented with little, and Reason and Religion enables us to take up with less, and so adds to its Strength, by contracting its Appetites, and retrenching its Occasions.

There is no Condition so full and affluent, but Content is, and will be a necessary Supplement to make a Man happy in it; and to compose the Mind in the Want of something or other, which it would be otherwise hankering after. And if so, how wretched must that Man needs be, who is perpetually impoverishing himself by new Indigences, founded upon new Desires, and imaginary Emptiness, still disposing him to seek for new Reliefs and Accessions to that Plenty, which is already become too big for Consumption, and the just Measures of Nature; which never finds any *real Pleasure*, but in the Satisfaction of some *real Want*.

But as for the unsatiable Miser, whom we are now speaking of, what Difference is there between such an one, and a Man over Head and Ears in Debt, and dogged by his Creditors,

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ditors, whereſoever he goes. For the Miſer is as much diſquieted, dunned, and called upon by the Eagerneſs of his own Deſires, as he whoſe Door is haunted and rapped at every Hour, by thoſe who come crying after him for what he owes them; both are equally pulled and haled to do that which they are unable to do; for as the poor Man cannot ſatisfy his Creditors, ſo neither can the rich Man ſatisfy his graſping, endleſs Deſires. And this is the direct and natural Reſult of increaſing Wealth. Riches are ſtill made the Reaſon of Riches; and Men get only, that they may *lay up*, and lay up only, that they *may keep*. Upon which Principle, it is evident, that the covetous Perſon is always thinking himſelf *in Want*, and conſequently, as far from any true Reliſh of Happineſs, as he muſt needs be, who apprehends himſelf under that Condition, which of all Things in the World *he moſt abhorrs*.

3. The third Evil which attends Men, in the Poſſeſſion of the Abundance of this World, is, That ſuch a Condition is the *proper Scene of Temptation*. *It brings Men*, as the Apoſtle tells us, in the forecited 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. *into a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts*, and ſuch as *drown Men in Deſtruction and*

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Perdition. So hard is it for the Corruption of Man's Nature not to work, where it has such Plenty of Materials to work upon. For who so strongly tempted to Pride, as he who has Riches to bear it out? Who so prone to be luxurious, as he who has Wealth to feed and maintain his Luxury? Who so apt to besot himself with Idleness, as he who can command, and have all Things, and yet do nothing? It is a Miracle almost for a rich Man not to be over-run with Vice, having both such strong Inclinations to it from *within*, and such Inducements and Opportunities to it from *without*. To be rich in *Money*, and *rich in good Works* too, rarely concur. All Opportunity and Power to gratify a Man's vicious Humour, is a shrewd Temptation to him actually to do so. Where Riches are at Hand, all Impediments and Obstructions vanish. For what is it, which Gold will not command? What Sin so costly, which the rich Man may not venture upon, if he can but stretch his *Conscience* to the Measures of his *Purse?* Such an one's Condition places him in the very high Way to Damnation; while it surrounds, and besets him with all those Allurements, which are apt to beguile and ruin Souls. And a Man must have a rare

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rare Maſtery of himſelf, and Controul of his Affections, to be able to look a pleaſing Vice in the Face, and to deſpiſe it, when the Affluence of his Fortune ſhall give him his free Choice of all thoſe Pleaſures, which his Nature ſo mightily importunes him to. But it is ſcarce an Age, that can give us an Inſtance of ſuch an impregnable and reſolved Abſtemiouſneſs under ſuch Circumſtances; Men are generally treacherous, and falſe to themſelves, and their greateſt Concerns; wretchedly weak and pliant to their innate Viciouſneſs, when it is once called forth, and enflamed by the Provocations it receives from the Wealth and Plenty they wallow in.

Whence it is, that many hopeful young Men debauch and drown themſelves in Senſuality, and come at length to loſe both their *Souls*, and their *Wits* too; and that, only becauſe it was their Lot to be born to great Eſtates, and thereby to have Money enough to keep Pace with their lewd Deſires, and to anſwer them with full and conſtant Supplies; while others, in the mean time, whoſe Nature and Temper was, perhaps, not at all better than their Own, have took to the Ways of Induſtry and Vertue, and ſo made themſelves both uſeful in their Lives,

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and happy after their Death, Only, through the Mercy of Providence, ſtinting their worldly Fortunes, and thereby cutting off thoſe Incentives of Luſt, and Inſtruments of Sin, which have inveigled, and abuſed others, and brought them headlong to Deſtruction. Certain it is, that a rich Man muſt uſe greater Caution to keep himſelf clear from Sin, and add greater Strength and Force to his Reſolutions to make himſelf vertuous, than Men in other Circumſtances need to do: For he has greater Temptations to break through, than they have; and conſequently, cannot make good his Ground at the ſame Rate of Vigilance and Activity, which Perſons leſs aſſaulted may. Which being his Caſe, it is hard to conceive, what Happineſs there can be in that Condition, which renders Vertue, a Thing in itſelf ſo difficult, infinitely more difficult; which turns the *ſtrait Gate* into a *Needle's Eye*, and makes Hell itſelf, which is ſo broad already, ten Times broader than it was before.

4. The fourth Evil attending Men, in the Poſſeſſion of this Earthly Abundance, is, the Malice and Envy of the World round about them. The Bounties of Providence are generally looked upon with an evil Eye, by ſuch

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such as are not the Objects of them themselves. And some have no other Fault, so much as objected against them, to provoke the Invectives and Satyrs of foul Mouths, but only that they thrive in the World, that they have fair Estates, and so need not herd themselves with the Rabble, *nor lick the Spittle* of great ones, nor own any other Dependences, but upon *God* in the first place, and upon themselves in the *next*. So long as Malice and Envy lodge in the Breasts of Mankind, it is impossible for a Man in a wealthy, flourishing Condition not to feel the Stroke of Mens Tongues, and of their Hands too, if Occasion serves. The fuller the Branches are, the more shall the Tree be flung at. What impeached *Naboth* of Treason and Blasphemy, but his spacious Vineyard, too convenient for his potent Neighbour, to let the Owner enjoy it long? What made the King of *Babylon* invade *Judea*, but the Royal Stores and Treasures displayed and boasted of by *Hezekiah* before the *Chaldean* Ambassadors, to the supplanting of his Crown, and the miserable Captivity of his Posterity? In *Sylla*'s bloody Proscription, Matters came to that pass in *Rome*, that if a Man had but a fair Garden, a rich Jewel, or but a Ring of

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Value, it was enough to get his Name poſted up in the Cut-Throat-Roll, and to coſt him his Life, for having any Thing worth the taking from him. Seldom do Armies invade poor Day-labouring Countreys; they are not the thin Weather-beaten Cottages, but the opulent Trading Cities, which invite the Plunderer; and War goes on but heavily, where there is no Proſpect of Spoil to enliven it. So that, whether we look upon Societies, or ſingle Perſons, ſtill we ſhall find them both owing this to their great Wealth, that it gives them the Honour to be thought worth ruining, and a fit Prey for thoſe, who ſhall think they deſerve that Wealth better than themſelves; as, they may be ſure, enough will.

And thus much for the ſecond General Argument, proving, *That true Happineſs conſiſts not in any Earthly Abundance*, taken from the Conſideration of thoſe Evils, which, for the moſt part, if not always, attend, and go along with it. But

3. The third General Argument for the Proof of the ſame, ſhall be taken from the utter Inability of the greateſt Earthly Riches, to remove thoſe Things, which chiefly render Men miſerable: And this will appear to us, if we reflect,

1. Upon

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1. Upon what affects the *Mind*. And
2. Upon what affects the *Body*. And here,

1. First for that which affects a Man's Spiritual Part, his Mind. Suppose that to be grieved, and labouring under the most pressing and unsupportable of all Griefs, *Trouble of Conscience:* And what can Riches, Power, or Honour contribute to its Removal? Can they pluck out any of those poysoned Arrows, which the Apprehension of God's Wrath fastens in the Soul? Can they heal the Wounds, and asswage the Anguish of a Conscience groaning, and even gasping under the Terrors of the Almighty? Nay, let the Grief arise but from a Temporal Cause, as suppose the Death and Loss of a dear Friend, the Diminution of a Man's Honour, or the like; and what miserable Comforters in any of these Cases are the heaviest Bags, and the fullest Coffers? The Pleasure arising from all other Temporal Enjoyments cannot equal the Smart which the Mind endures from the Loss of any one of them. For what Pleasure did *David* find in his Crown and Scepter, and all his Royal Greatness, when his dear (though sottishly beloved) *Absalom* was torn from him? What Enjoyment had *Haman* in all

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all his Court-Preferments, his Grandeur and Intereſt in his Royal Maſter's Affection, when *Mordecai*, his moſt maligned Enemy, refuſed to cringe to him in the Gate? Why, juſt none at all, if we may take his Word for it, who ſhould know his own Mind beſt. For in *Eſth.* v. 11, 12. when he had reckoned up all his Wealth, Glory, and Greatneſs, together with his numerous Off-Spring, deſigned (as he thought) to inherit all of it; he adds in the 13th *Verſe*, (and a remarkable Paſſage it is) *yet all this availeth me nothing, ſo long as I ſee* Mordecai *the* Jew *ſitting in the King's Gate.* The Pride of his ſwelling Heart, and the Envy of his malicious Eye racked and tormented him more than all, that the Splendor and Magnificence of the *Perſian* Court (the greateſt then in the World) could delight or gratify him with. And now, what poor Contributors muſt theſe Earthly Enjoyments needs be to a Man's real Happineſs, when an hundred Pleaſures ſhall not be able to counter-balance one Sorrow? But that one croſs Accident ſhall ſour the whole Maſs of a Man's Comforts? And the Mind ſhall as really droop, languiſh, and pine away, while a Man is ſurrounded with vaſt Treaſures, rich Attendance, and a plentiful

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tiful Table; as if he had neither where to lay his *Head*, nor where-withall to fill his *Mouth*. For all the Delight he does, or can reap from his other Comforts, ſerves only to quicken and increaſe the Senſe of that Calamity, which has actually took Poſſeſſion of him. But in the

2*d* place, Let us conſider the Miſeries which affect the *Body*; and we ſhall find, that the greateſt Pleaſure ariſing from any Degree of Wealth or Plenty whatſoever, is ſo far from reaching the Soul, that it ſcarce pierces the Skin. What would a Man give to purchaſe a Releaſe, nay but a ſmall Reſpite from the extreme Pains of the Gout or Stone; and yet, if he could fee his Phyſician with both the *Indies*, neither Art nor Money can redeem, or but reprieve him from his Miſery. No Man feels the Pangs and Tortures of his preſent Diſtemper (be it what it will) at all the leſs, for his being rich. His Riches indeed may have occaſioned, but they cannot allay them. No Man's Fever burns the gentler, for his drinking his Juleps in a golden Cup. Nor could *Alexander* himſelf, at the Price of all his Conqueſts, antidote, or recall the poyſonous Draught, when it had once got into his Veins. When God ſhall think

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think fit to caſt a Man upon his Bed of Pain or Sickneſs, let him ſummon about him his Thouſands, and his ten Thouſands, his Lands, and his rich Mannors, and ſee whether he can bribe, or buy off, or ſo much as compound with his Diſtemper, but for one Night's Reſt. No; the ſick Bed is ſo like the Grave, which it leads to, that it uſes Rich and Poor, Prince and Peaſant all alike. Pain has no Reſpect of Perſons, but ſtrikes all with an equal, and an impartial Stroke.

We know, how God reproved the fooliſh Worldling, (as our Saviour tells us) in *Luk.* xii. 20. *Thou Fool*, (ſays he) *this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee, and then whoſe ſhall all thoſe Things be, which thou haſt hoarded up?* But we may bring the Sentence here pronounced much lower, and yet render it dreadful enough, even within the Compaſs of this Life; and ſay, *Thou Fool, this Night, this Day ſhall thy Health and Strength be taken from thee*; and then, what Pleaſure, what Enjoyment will all thy Poſſeſſions afford thee? God may ſmite thee with ſome lingring, diſpiriting Diſeaſe, which ſhall crack the Strength of thy Sinews, and ſuck the Marrow out of thy Bones; and then, what Pleaſure can it be to wrap

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wrap thy Living Skeleton in Purple, and rot alive in Cloth of Gold? When thy Cloaths ſhall ſerve only to upbraid the Uſeleſneſs of thy Limbs, and thy rich Fare ſtand before thee only to reproach and tantalize the Weakneſs of thy Stomach; while thy Conſumption is every Day dreſſing thee up for the Worms? All which, I think, is a ſufficient Demonſtration, that *Plenty* and *Enjoyment* are not the ſame Thing. They are the inward Strength and Sufficiency of a Man's Faculties, which muſt render him a Subject capable of taſting or enjoying the good Things, which Providence beſtows upon him. But as it is God only, who *creates*; ſo it is he alone, who muſt *ſupport* and *preſerve* theſe; and when he withdraws his Hand, and lets Nature ſink into its Original Weakneſs and Inſufficiency, all a Man's Delights fail him, all his Enjoyments vaniſh. For no Man (to be ſure) can *enjoy himſelf* any longer, than he can be ſaid *to be himſelf.*

But now, if Riches are thus wholly unable of themſelves to effect any Thing towards a Man's Relief, under a corporal Malady, how can they, as ſuch, deſerve the Name of Felicity? For what are they good for? What can they do for him? The Man is ſick, and his

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his Diſeaſe torments, and Death threatens him; and can they either remove the one, or keep off the other? Nothing leſs. But it will be anſwered perhaps, that when a Man is well and healthy, they may ſerve him for many Conveniences of Life: They may do ſo, I confeſs; but then, this alſo is as true; That he, who is *healthy* and *well*, may enjoy all the neceſſary Satisfactions which his Nature calls for, though he has no other Riches in the World, but thoſe poor Incomes, which he daily earns with the Labour of his Hands, or the Working of his Brain. So that, the Sum and Reſult of all their Efficacy towards a Man's Happineſs, amounts but to this; that Riches may indeed miniſter ſomething to the making of that Perſon *happy*, who is in ſuch a Condition *of Health and Strength*, as may enable him, if he pleaſes, to make himſelf *happy* without them. For a bare Competence, and that a very ſlender one too, will anſwer all the Needs of Nature; and where a Competence is *ſufficient*, an *Abundance*, I am ſure, cannot be *neceſſary*. And this introduces the

4*th* and laſt Argument to prove, *That Man's Happineſs conſiſts not in any Earthly Abundance*, taken from this Conſideration; That

That the greateſt Happineſs, which this Life is capable of, may be, and actually has been, enjoyed without this *Abundance*; and conſequently, cannot depend upon it. Now, that, undoubtedly, is the chief Happineſs of Life, for the Attainment of which, all other Things are deſigned but as the Means, and ſubſervient Inſtruments. And what elſe can this be, but the Content, Quiet, and inward Satisfaction of a Man's Mind? For why, or for what other imaginable Reaſon, are Riches, Power, and Honour ſo much valued by Men, but becauſe they promiſe themſelves that Content and Satisfaction of Mind from them, which, they fully believe, cannot otherwiſe be had? This, no doubt, is the inward Reaſoning of Mens Minds in the preſent Caſe. But the Experience of Thouſands (againſt which all Arguments ſignify nothing) irrefragably evinces the Contrary. For was there not a Sort of Men, whom we read of in the former Ages of the World, called *The Ancient Philoſophers*, who even while they lived in the World, lived *above it*; and, in a manner, *without it*; and yet, all the while accounted themſelves the happieſt Men *in it*? And from theſe, if we paſs to the Profeſſors and Practicers of an higher Philoſophy; the Apoſtles

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Apostles and Primitive Christians, who ever so overflowed with spiritual Joy, as they did? *A Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory*, as St. *Paul* terms it; a Joy not to be forced or ravished from the Heart, once possessed of it, as our Saviour himself, the great Giver of it, has assured us. Hear St. *Paul* and *Silas* singing out this Joy aloud in the dismal Prison, where they sate expecting Death every Moment. And from hence to proceed to the next Ages of the Church. Who could be fuller of, and more transported with a joyous Sense of their Condition, than the Martyrs of those Primitive Times, who were so far from any of the Accommodations of this World, that their only Portion in it, was to live in Hunger, Nakedness, and Want, and stripped of every Thing but the Bodies, *in* and *through* which they suffered all these Afflictions. And as this internal, spiritual Comfort is doubtless the highest that humane Nature is capable of, and may serve instead of all others, so it descends even to those of the lowest Condition. And the poor, labouring Peasant, with his coarse Fare, and a good Conscience to season, and make a Feast of it, feeds as chearfully, and with as much inward Satisfaction, as his great Landlord,

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or flouriſhing Neighbour can; there being, for the moſt part, as much of real Enjoyment under the meaneſt Cottage, as within the Walls of the ſtatelieſt, and moſt magnificent Palaces. For does not the honeſt Plowman, whoſe *Strength* is his whole *Eſtate*, and his *Day's-Work* his *Revenue*, carry about him as light an Heart, and as clear a Breaſt, as he who commands Armies, or can call 35 Millions his own? No doubt he does; and his Experience (an Evidence too great to be borne down) will vouch the ſame. Accordingly, let any one ſhew me that Enjoyment or Pleaſure, which Men ſeek for from a vaſt Eſtate in Land or Moneys; and I will ſhew the ſame, or ſomething equal to it, full as high and ſatisfactory in that Man, who cannot call one Foot of Land in the whole World his own, and whoſe Purſe never reached beyond the *Preſent*, nor knew what it was, to lay up for the *Morrow*. Many, doubtleſs, very many ſuch there are, who eat their Bread with as much Reliſh, ſleep as ſoundly, think as chearfully, and rejoice as much in their homely Dame, and ragged Children, together with their High-ſhoed Companions, as thoſe who can command Sea and Land to their Tables, domineer over Kingdoms, and

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ſet their Foot upon the Necks of conquered Nations.

Content is the Gift of Heaven; and not the certain Effect of any Thing upon Earth; and it is as eaſy for Providence to convey it without Wealth, as with it; it being the undeniable Prerogative of the firſt Cauſe, *That whatſoever it does by the Mediation of ſecond Cauſes, it can do, immediately by itſelf, without them.* The Heavens can, and do every Day derive Water and Refreſhment upon the Earth, without either Pipes or Conduits; though the Weakneſs of humane Induſtry is forced to fly to theſe little Aſſiſtances, to compaſs the ſame Effects. Happineſs and Comfort ſtream immediately from God himſelf, as Light iſſues from the Sun, and ſometimes looks, and darts itſelf into the meaneſt Corners, while it forbears to viſit the largeſt, and the nobleſt Rooms. Every Man is happy or miſerable, as the Temper of his Mind places him, either directly *under*, or beſide the Influences of the Divine Nature; which enlighten and enliven the diſpoſed Mind with ſecret, ineffable Joys, and ſuch as the vicious, or unprepared Mind is wholly unacquainted with. *We have nothing, and yet we poſſeſs all Things*, ſays the Apoſtle, in

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in 2 *Cor.* vi. 10. and can a greater Happineſs be imagined, than that which gives a Man here *all Things in Poſſeſſion*, together with a glorious Eternity in *Reverſion?* In a word, it is not *what a Man has*, but *what he is*, which muſt make him happy: And thus, as I have demonſtrated the utter Inſufficiency of Riches to make Men happy, ſo to confirm the high Reaſon of our Saviour's Diſſuaſive from Covetouſneſs, againſt all Objections, or ſo much as Pretences to the contrary; we ſhall further obſerve, *That Covetouſneſs is by no means a certain Way to procure Riches*; and, if neither Riches can make a *Man happy*, nor Covetouſneſs make *him rich*, all Pleas for it muſt needs be torn up by the very Roots. And for this, we need not aſſign any other Ground, or Cauſe of the ſtrange and frequent Diſappointments which Covetouſneſs meets with in the Ends it drives at; if we conſider the Nature of the Means and Inſtruments which it makes uſe of for the bringing of theſe Ends about. Such as are *Fraud* and *Force*, *Schiſm* and *Sedition*, *Sacriledge* and *Rebellion*, all of them Practices carrying the Curſe of God inſeparably cleaving to them, and inherent in them. And to ſhew this in the Principal of them, the Vio-

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lation of Things *sacred*, who ever knew any Family made *rich* by *Sacrilege?* Or any Robber of the Altar, but sooner or later, he fell a just *Sacrifice to the Shrine he robbed?* Covetousness may possibly sometimes procure such an one a *broad Estate* for the Present, but a *long one* Never. Wealth may brave and flourish it for a while in the Front and Fore-Part of his Life, but Poverty generally brings up the Rear. For the Justice of God is never in Jest, nor does it work by halves in such Cases; but, whether by a speedy or lingring Execution, by *striking* or *eating* through the *cursed Thing*, it will be sure to make good its Blow at last. A notable Instance of which, we have in the Faction, which carried all before it in the grand Rebellion of *Forty One*. Men were then *factious* and *rapacious*, because they were first *covetous*; and none more so, than a Pack of Incendiaries, who had usurped the Name *of Ministers of the Gospel* For these were the Men, who, with such Rage and Vehemence, preached down Episcopacy, and the Established Government of the Church, in hopes to have had a great Part (at least) of the Revenues of it bestowed upon them for their Pains. But, alas, poor Tools! they understood not the Work they

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they were employed in; for the Lay-Grandees, their Masters (who had *more Wit with their Godliness*) meant no such Thing: No, the *Hunters* never intended, *that the Hounds should eat the Hare*; but though their Throats, their Noise, and their Fangs were made use of, to run it down, and catch it; yet being once caught, they quickly found that it was to *be Meat only for their Masters*; and that, whatsoever became of the *Constitution* of the *Church*, effectual Care was taken, that the *Lands* of it should go another Way. And in good Earnest, it would fare but very ill with Mankind, if all that the *Mouth gapes for*, the *Hand* should be able to *grasp*. But, Thanks be to God, innumerable are the Ways, which Providence has, (some of them visible, and some secret and *invisible*, but all of them *certain*) by which it crosses and confounds the greedy Wretch, even in his most refined Contrivances, and Arts of Getting; and thereby gives the World a convincing Proof, one would think, (if Experience could convince Men) that it is God, and God alone, who (as *Moses* said to the *Israelites*) *must teach Men to get Wealth*, as well as enable them to enjoy it. And consequently, that for a

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Man to be *covetous*, and *poor* too, a *Miſer*, and yet a *Beggar*, is no ſuch Paradox, as to imply either an Inconſiſtency in the Thing itſelf, or a *Contradiction* in the *Terms*.

And now, in the laſt place, having finiſhed the Subject before us, in the ſeveral Particulars propoſed to be diſcourſed of by us: Let us ſum up, and recapitulate all in a few Words, *viz.* That ſince it is natural for Men to deſign to make their Lives as happy as they can; and ſince they promiſe themſelves this Happineſs from Riches, and thereupon uſe Covetouſneſs, as the ſureſt Means, to attain theſe Riches; and yet, upon all the foregoing Accounts, it is manifeſt, that neither can Covetouſneſs certainly procure Riches, nor Riches certainly procure a Man this Happineſs; it muſt follow, by an unavoidable Inference, that Covetouſneſs muſt needs be in the ſame Degree *irrational*, in which Riches are to this great End *ineffectual*; and conſequently, that there is as little *Reaſon for Avarice*, as there is *Religion in it*. And therefore, that the covetous Perſon (whatſoever he may ſeem, either in his own, or the World's Opinion) is, in Truth, neither *rich*, *reaſonable*, nor *religious*; but chargeable with *all that Folly*, and liable to

all

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all that Misery, which is justly the Shame and Portion of those, *who* (according to those other excellent Words of our Saviour, in the 21st Verse of this Chapter) *lay up Treasure for themselves, and are not rich towards God.*

To whom (*as the sole Giver of all Happiness*, whether with *or* without *Riches*) *be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore.* Amen.

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A

DISCOURSE

Preached at

CHRIST-CHURCH, *Oxon*,

Before the

UNIVERSITY,

October 15. 1699.

MATTH. VI. 21.

For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.

AS Man is naturally a Creature of great *Want and Weakness*, so he does as naturally carry a most intimate, and inseparable *Sense* of that *Want* and *Weakness* about him: And because a State of *Want* must needs be also a State of *Uneasiness*,

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ſineſs, there is nothing, which Nature puts a Man, with ſo much Force and Earneſtneſs upon, as to attempt a Supply and Relief of the *Wants which he is ſo ſenſible* of, and *ſo incommoded* by. Inſomuch that the whole Courſe of his Actings, from firſt to laſt, proceeds in this Method: Firſt, That every Action which a Man does, is in order to his *compaſſing or obtaining to himſelf ſome Good thereby*. And Secondly, That he endeavours to *compaſs or obtain* this *Good*, becauſe he *deſires it*. And Thirdly and Laſtly, That he *deſires* it, becauſe he *wants it*; or at leaſt thinks, that he does ſo. So that the *firſt Spring*, which ſets all the *Wheels* and *Faculties* of the Soul agoing, is, a Man's *Apprehenſion* of ſome *Good wanting* to complete the Happineſs of his Condition.

But, as every *Good* is not in the ſame Degree *contributive* to this *Happineſs*, ſo neither is it in the ſame Degree *deſirable*: And therefore, ſince *Want* (as we have noted) is ſtill the *Meaſure*, as well as *Ground* of *Deſire*; that which anſwers all the *Wants*, and fills all the *Vacuities* of a Rational Nature, muſt needs be the *full* and *ultimate Object* of its Deſires. And this was called by the Philoſophers, Man's *Summum Bonum*; and here, by

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by our Saviour, *Man's Treasure*; both Expressions importing a *Good*, so comprehensively Great and Equal to all the Appetites of Nature, that the Presence and Possession of this alone renders a Man happy, and the Want or Absence of it miserable. Upon which Account, though it be impossible, that this *prime or chief Good* should admit of any *Plurality*, so as to be really more than *one*, yet in regard Men take it in by their *Apprehensions*, which are so exceedingly subject to Error and Deception, even in their highest Concerns, and since *Error* is various, and indeed *infinite*; hence it is, that this *Treasure*, or *Summum Bonum* falls under a very great Multiplicity: This Man proposing to himself one Thing, and that Man another, and a third something else for *his chief Good*; and that, from which alone he expects all that *Happiness* and Satisfaction, which the Condition of his *Nature* renders him either capable or desirous of.

Now the Words of the Text may be considered two Ways.

First, As they are an *entire Proposition* in themselves. And

Secondly,

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Secondly, As they are *an Argument* relating to, and enforcing of a foregoing Precept, in the 19th and 20th Verses: And accordingly, in the Prosecution of them, we shall take in both Considerations.

And first, If we take them, as they are an *entire Proposition* in themselves, so they offer us these two Things.

1*st*, Something supposed, which is, *That every Man has something or other, which he accounts his Treasure, or chief Good.* And

2*dly*, Something expresly declared, namely, *That whatsoever a Man accounts his Treasure, or chief Good, upon that he places his Heart, his whole Desires and Affections.*

And first, For the *Thing supposed, or implyed in the Words*; to wit, *That every Man has something or other, which he accounts his Treasure, or chief Good.* The Truth and Certainty of which Proposition will appear founded upon these two Things.

1. The *Activity* of Man's Mind. And
2. The *Method* of his Acting. And

1. For the first of these. The Mind of Man is of that *spirituous, stirring* Nature, that

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that it is perpetually at Work. Something it is ſtill in Purſuit of, either by *Contemplation or Deſire:* The Foundation of which *latter*, I ſhew, was *Want*; and conſequently, as Man will be always *wanting* ſomething or other, ſo he will be always ſending forth his *Deſires* to hunt after, and bring that Thing in, which *he wants:* Which is ſo true, that ſome Men having compaſſed the greateſt and nobleſt Objects of their *Deſires*, (ſo that *Deſire* could no longer aſcend, as being already at the Top) they have betook themſelves to inferiour and ignoble Exerciſes; ſo that, amongſt the *Roman* Emperors, (then Lords of a great Part of the World) we find *Nero* at his *Harp*, *Domitian killing Flies*, and *Commodus* playing the *Fencer*; and all this, only to buſy themſelves ſome Way or other: Nothing being ſo grievous and tedious to Humane Nature, as perfect *Idleneſs*.

But now, there is not any Thing (though never ſo mean and trivial) which a Man does, but he antecedently deſigns himſelf ſome Satisfaction by the Doing of it; ſo that he advances to every *Action*, as to a Degree of *Happineſs*, as to ſomething, which, according to its *Meaſure* and *Proportion*, will gratify or *pleaſe him*; and without which, he

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he would be in that Degree uneasy and troublesome to himself. The Spirit of a Man, like a Flame, being of such an *operative*, and withall, of such a *catching* Quality, that it is still clòsing in with some desirable, suitable Good, as the *Food* that nourishes, and the *Subject* that supports it; so impossible is it, that *Desire* should wholly lie still. For though the Soul had actually all that it could enjoy, yet then *Desire* would run out into the *Future*, and from the *Present Fruition*, project the *Continuance* and *Preservation* of its beloved Object. In short, what *Blood* is to the *Body*, that *Desire* is to the *Soul*; and as the *Blood* will *circulate*, while the *Body lives*, so *Desire* will act, and range about, while the *Soul subsists*; and nothing but the *Annihilation* of one can supersede, or stop the Motion of the other.

And, the Truth is, this innate *Restlesness of Desire* implanted in the *Soul of Man*, is the great Engine, by which God would draw it to Himself: And if Men would be so far true to themselves, and to the most Ruling Principles of their Nature, as to keep *Desire* still upon the *Advance*, till it fixed upon something which would absolutely and fully satisfy it, it were impossible, but that,

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in the Iſſue, it ſhould *terminate in God.* But that which makes this great Principle ſo ineffective of any True Happineſs to *Man*, is, that *he* does not carry it conſtantly and directly *forward*, but often ſuffers it to recurr, or turn aſide to former falſe Satisfactions; firſt taſting an Object, and then upon Tryal, leaving it for its Emptineſs; and yet afterwards returning to it again, from a vain Hope to ſpeed better, than he had done before. So that by this Means there is a continual *reſtleſs Circulation* from one empty Thing to another. The Soul, in this Caſe, being juſt like a ſick Man, ſtill altering *his Poſtures* in order to his Eaſe; though, when he has tryed all, he finds no more Eaſe in one, than in another; a certain Demonſtration, that the Soul itſelf, in the preſent State of Nature, is in a moſt deplorably *ſick*, and *diſordered* Condition. But

2*dly*, The ſecond Argument to prove, *that every Man has ſomething or other, which he accounts his Treaſure, his peculiar, or chief Good*, ſhall be taken from the *Method of his Actings*, which ſtill proceeds by a Direction of *Means to one great and laſt* End. For as an *infinite Progreſs* is exploded in all Matters of *Ratiocination*, as *abſurd* and *impoſſible*,

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possible, so it is equally absurd in Matters of *Practice*. It being not more necessary to assign, and fix some *first Principle of Discourse*, than to state some last *End of Acting:* All a Man's *Practicks* hanging loose and uncertain, unless they are governed and knit together by the Prospect of some certain End.

Now, it is the same Thing, which sustains these several Denominations of *last End*, *chief Good*, *or Treasure*; all, and every one of them signifying neither more nor less than the grand and *ultimate Term*, to which a *rational Agent* directs all his Actions and Desires: Every Man naturally, and necessarily intending some one *principal Thing*, to the *acquiring* of which, all that he *does*, *thinks*, or *desires*, is subservient; and in which, as in a kind of *Center*, all his Actions *meet*, and *unite*.

For though a Man has not *continually*, and *actually* the Prospect of *that End*, in every one of his Actions, yet he has it *habitually* and *vertually*; forasmuch, as being once designed by him, all his Actions tend to, and promote the Compassing of it; As it is not necessary, that a *Traveller* should have his Journey's End in his Thoughts, every

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every Step that he takes; but it is enough that he first designs it, and in the Strength of that Design, is by every Step carried nearer and nearer to it; every Man has some prime, paramount Object, which employs his Head, and fills his Heart, rules his Thoughts, and (as it were) lies in his Bosom; and is to him above, and instead of all other Enjoyments whatsoever. And thus much *for the Thing supposed, or implyed in the Words*, namely, That every Man has some peculiarly valued Thing, which he accounts *his Treasure, or chief Good.* But,

2*dly*, The other Thing, to be considered by us, is, *That which is expresly declared in the Text*, namely, *That whatsoever a Man places his Treasure or his chief Good in, upon that he places his Heart also.* Where, according to the *Language of Scripture*, the Word *Heart* compendiously denotes to us, all *the Powers and Faculties* of *Man's Soul*, together with their respective Motions and Operations. And since the Word *Treasure* is a metaphorical Term for a Man's *prime or chief Good*, we are to take an Account, how a Man prosecutes *this Good*, from the Analogy of those Actions which he exerts with reference to a

Treasure

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Treasure; and which, I conceive, may be reduced to these Four. As

1. A *restless and laborious* Endeavour to *acquire and possess* himself of it. There is no Man, who heartily, and in good Earnest desires *to be Rich*, or *Great*, or *Learned*, who can be *idle*. For *Desire* is the Spring of *Diligence*, and the *Heart* infallibly sets both *Head* and *Hands*, and every Thing else on Work. Great Desire is like a great *Fire*, and all Difficulties before it are like *Stubble*; it will certainly make its Way through them, and devour them. From whence it is, that it *generally* proves so *dangerous*, and too often *fatal*, to stand between *a Man*, (especially, if in *Place* and *Power*) and that which he most *desires*; and many innocent and brave Persons have, to their Cost, found it so. For *Dangers* and *Death* itself shall be nothing; *Conscience* and *Religion* nothing; nay, the very *Hopes* of *Heaven*, and the *Fears of Hell* shall be accounted as nothing, when a furious, headstrong *Desire* shall resolve to break through them all; and, like *Hannibal* in his March, cut through *Rocks* and *Mountains*, till it either *finds*, or *makes a Way* to its beloved Object. What made *Jacob* think those *seven Years of hard Service for* Rachel, *but a*

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few Days, as 'tis ſaid in *Gen.* xxix. 20. but the extraordinary and invincible Love which he bore to her? And what makes the Trader into foreign Countries defy the *Winds*, and the *Seas*, and hazard the *Safety* which he actually has and loves, but the *Wealth* which he loves more? All the ſtupendious Inſtances of *Courage*, *Patience*, *Induſtry*, and the like, which have ſo ſwelled the *Volumes of Hiſtory*, and amuſed the World, have been but the Effects of *great* and victorious *Deſire*; they are all of them but the Inſtruments of *Love*, to compaſs the Things which Men have firſt ſet their Hearts upon; ſo that, when *Courage takes the Field* for Battle, we may be ſure, that it is *Deſire* which *leads it on*; filling the Mind with glorious Ideas of the *Prize* it contends for. All the noble Violences done to Nature, have been reſolvable into this Cauſe; nay, the very Reſtraints of *Appetite* have been but the Effects of an *Appetite* more controuling and predominant.

What is it, that a Man more *naturally* affects, than *Society* and *Converſe?* (it being a Kind of Multiplication of himſelf into every Perſon of the Company he converſes with.) And what, by Conſequence, can be more uneaſy to this Ζῶον Πολιτικὸν, this

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sociable Creature, than the dry, pensive Retirements of Solitude? Nevertheless, when a nobler Thing shall have seized his Imagination, and his *Desires* have took a Flight above the first *Inclinations* of his Nature, by inspiring him with the diviner *Love of Knowledge*, or being *serviceable to his Country*; why then, he can, with *Delight*, retreat into his Cell, dwell with himself, and converse with his own Thoughts, and, in those higher Speculations, forget all his merry Meetings and *Companions*; nay, and his very *Food* and *Rest*, and live not only above the *Pleasures*, but almost above the *Wants* of Nature too. In *Prov.* xviii. 1. *Solomon* tells us, *That, through Desire, a Man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all Wisdom.* So that it is this mighty Thing, *Desire*, which makes a Man break off, and sequester himself from all those Jollities, those airy, empty Diversions, which use to court and win the Appetites of Vulgar Souls. Thus *Nature* (we see) is forced to bend to *Art*; *Art* is the Daughter and Issue of *Necessity*; and the *Standard* and *Measure* of this Necessity is *Desire*; *Desire*, which nothing almost can withstand, or set Bounds to; which makes

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Paths over the Seas; turns the Night into Day; and in a word, charges through *Hunger* and *Poverty*, and all thoſe Hardſhips, which humane Nature is ſo apt to ſhrink under, but it will, at length, arrive at the Satisfaction, which it is in Purſuit of.

What high and vaſt Atchievements does the Apoſtle, in the xith of the *Hebrews*, aſcribe to Faith: *As the ſubduing of Kingdoms, ſtopping the Mouths of Lions, quenching the Violence of Fire; out of Weakneſs making Men ſtrong*, and that to ſuch a Degree, as *to endure Tortures, cruel Mockings, Scourgings, Bonds, and Impriſonments; nay, and to be ſtoned, ſawn aſunder, and ſlain with the Sword.* But how did *Faith* do all this? Why, in the Strength of *Love*; *Faith* being properly the *Eye of the Soul* to ſpy out, and repreſent to it thoſe excellent, amiable Things, the *Love* and *Deſire* of which ſhould be *hotter than Fire, and ſtronger than Death*; bearing a Man *through*, and *above* all the Terrors of *both*, for the obtaining of ſo tranſcendent a Good: In ſhort, *Faith* ſhews the Soul its *Treaſure*; which being once *ſeen* by it, naturally enflames the Affections; and they as naturally engage all the Faculties and Powers of *Soul* and

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and *Body* in a restless, indefatigable Endeavour after it. And thus, in all those heroick Instances of *Passive Fortitude*, *Faith wrought by Love*, and therefore it wrought *Wonders*.

2. Whatsoever a Man accounts his *Treasure*, *that he places his whole Delight in*; it entertains his Eye, refreshes his Fancy, feeds his Thoughts, and, next to his *Conscience*, affords him a *continual Feast*. It fills, and answers all his Capacities of Pleasure; and *to please*, we know, is much more than barely *to support*. It is the utmost Limit of Enjoyment; the most refined Part of Living; and, in a word, the last and highest Thing which Nature looks for. It quenches a Man's Thirst, not only as *Water*, which just keeps Nature alive, but as *Wine* which both sustains and gratifies it too; and adds a *Pleasure*, as well as serves a *Necessity*.

Nothing has so strong, and fast an Hold upon the Nature and Mind of Man, as that which *delights* it: For whatsoever a Man *delights* to do, by his Good-Will he would be always doing: *Delight* being that which perpetuates the *Union* between the *Will* and the *Object*, and brings them together, by the surest, the most voluntary, and constant Re-

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turns. And from hence, by the Way, we may affirm it, as a certain, unfailing Truth, *That no Man* ever *was*, or can be conſiderable in *any Art* or *Profeſſion* whatſoever, which he does not take a *particular Delight* in; for that otherwiſe, he will never heartily and aſſiduouſly apply himſelf to it; nor is it morally poſſible, that he ſhould.

Men, indeed, in the Courſe of this World, are brought to do many Things, meer Neceſſity enforcing them, and the *Want*, and *Weakneſs* of their Condition creating that Neceſſity. But ſtill, in all ſuch Caſes, the *Man* goes one Way, and his *Deſires* another; for he acts but as a Slave under the Eye of a ſevere *Maſter*; the Dread of ſome greater *Suffering* making him ſubmit to the Diſciplines *of a leſs*. But unſhackle his Nature, and turn his Deſires looſe, and then you ſhall ſee, what he will *chooſe* in order to his *Pleaſure*, and the free unreſtrained Enjoyment of himſelf; an *Epicure* may be brought to confine himſelf to his Chamber, and take Phyſick (as none generally need it more;) But will he look upon the Potion with the ſame Eye with which he uſes to ſee the *Wine ſparkle in the Glaſs?* Or rejoice in the Company of his *Phyſician*, as much as in

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in that of his *Boon Companions?* No, the Actions of Pleasure carry quite differing *Signs* and *Marks* upon them from such as are *forced*; *Marks*, above all the Arts of *Dissimulation*, or the Powers of *Compulsion*. For so far as any Thing *pleases the Heart*, it *commands* it; and the *Command* is absolute, and the *Obedience* chearful.

3*dly*, Whatsoever a Man accounts his Treasure, from that he derives the *last Support* of his Mind in all his Troubles. Let an *ambitious* Man lose his *Friends*, his *Health*, or his *Estate*, yet, if the Darling of his Thoughts, his *Honour* and his *Fame*, continue entire, his *Spirit* will Still bear up. And let a *voluptuous* Man be stripped of his *Credit* and *Good-Name*, his Pleasures and Sensuality, in the midst of all his *Disgrace*, shall relieve him. And lastly, (to name no more) let a *covetous Miser* have both *Pleasure* and *Honour* taken from him, yet so long as his *Bags* are full, and the *golden Heaps* glister in his Eyes, *his Heart will be at Ease*, and other *Losses* shall affect him little; they may possibly raze the *Surface*, but they descend not into the *Vitals* of his Comforts.

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The Reaſon of all which is, becauſe an *ambitious* Perſon values *Honour*, a *voluptuous* Man *Pleaſure*, and a *covetous* Wretch *Wealth*, above any other Enjoyment in the World. All other Things being but taſteleſs and inſipid to them, in Compariſon of that one, which is the ſole *Minion* of their Fancy, and the *Idol* of their Affections. And accordingly, it would be found but a *vain and fruitleſs Attempt*, to go about to move the *Heart* of any of theſe Perſons, but by touching upon the proper *String* that tyes and holds it; ſo that the way to humble, and bring down an Ambitious, aſpiring Man, is to *diſparage* him, to expoſe, and ſhew his *Blind-ſide* (which ſuch kind of Perſons never fail to have;) and the moſt effectual Courſe to make a Covetous Man *miſerable* (in the right Senſe) is to impoveriſh him: And when ſuch a Change of Condition once paſſes upon ſuch Perſons, they become like Men without either Life, or Spirit, the moſt pitiful, forlorn, abject Creatures under Heaven, and full of that Complaint of *Micah*, in *Judges* xviii. 24. *Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* For whatſoever a Man accounts his *chief Good*, ſo as to ſuffer it to engroſs, and

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and take up all his *Desires*, That he makes his *God*, That he *deifies and adores*, whether he knows so much or no. For certain it is, that if he would lay out himself never so much, in the Acts of Religion, he could do no more even to *God himself*, than *love him*, *trust in him*, and *rely upon him*, and in a word, *give him his Heart*; nor, indeed, does God require any more; for it is a *Man's All.* Take the *Heart*, and you have the Man by Consequence. Govern the *Spring*, and you command the *Motion.* The whole Man (as I may so express it) is but the *Appendix* of his own Heart.

4*thly* and *Lastly*, Whatsoever a Man accounts his *Treasure*, for the *Preservation of that he will part with all other Things, if he cannot enjoy that, and them together.* See a Merchant in a Storm at Sea, and what he values most he will be sure to throw over-board last; every Man, when he is exposed to any great and imminent Danger, marshals his Enjoyments just as *Jacob* did his Family, when he was to meet his Brother *Esau*, whom he was in such Fear of, (*Gen.* xxxiii. 2.) the *Handmaids*, and their Children he put fore-most; *Leah*, and her Children next; but *Rachel*, and her

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her Children the hindermoſt of all. The Reaſon of which was, becauſe he had ſet his Heart *moſt* upon her, and therefore would have her *furtheſt* from the *Danger*, if it might be eſcaped, and *laſt* in the *Suffering*, if it proved unavoidable. A Father will be rather ſtripp'd of his Eſtate, than bereaved of his Children, and if he cannot keep them all, he will (though with the Loſs of the reſt) redeem the Son of his Affections.

It is poſſible indeed, that a Man himſelf may not always perfectly know, what he *loves moſt*, till ſome *notable Tryal* comes, which ſhall ſeparate between him, and what he has, and call for all his Enjoyments one after another; and then preſently his Eyes ſhall be opened, and he ſhall plainly find, that the Garment which ſits *neareſt to him*, ſhall, by his Good-Will, be laſt *torn from him*. Bring a Man under *Perſecution*, and that ſhall tell him, whether the *Peace of his Conſcience*, or the *Security of his Fortune*, be the Thing which he preferrs and values moſt. That ſhall tell him, whether he had rather be *plundered*, or *perjured*: And whether the Guilt of *Rebellion and Sacrilege* does not ſtrike a greater Horror into him, than all the Miſeries of an *Ejectment* or *Sequeſtration*.

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tion. But if, at the *critical Time of Tryal*, such an one shall surrender up his *Conscience*, that he may continue warm in his House, and his *Estate*, let him no longer doubt, what it is, that is his *Treasure*, and what lies deepest in his Heart. For it is that, which he can most hardly be without. But his Conscience (it seems) he can easily shake Hands with; and therefore, whereſoever he may place his *Religion*, it is certain, that he places his *Happiness* somewhere else.

Skin for Skin, and all that a Man has will he give for his Life, (commonly speaking) but let a Man love any Thing better than his Life, and Life itself shall be given for it. And the World has seen the Experiment; for some have loved their *Country* better than their Lives, and accordingly have died for it: And some their *Parents*, some their *Honour*, to that Degree, as to sacrifice their *dearest* Blood for the Preservation of one, and Vindication of the other. But still, this is the sure, infallible Test of *Love*, that the *Measure of its Strength* is to be taken by the *Fastness of its Hold*. *Benjamin* was apparently dearest to his Father, because he was still kept with him, while the rest of his

his Brethren were ſent from him. He was to him, as the *Apple of his Eye*; and therefore, no wonder, if he could not endure to have him *out of it.*

And thus I have done with the firſt Conſideration of the Words; namely, *As they are an entire Propoſition in themſelves.* I come now to the

2. To wit, *As they are an Argument relating to, and enforcing of the foregoing Precept*, in the 19th and 20th Verſes, *Lay not up for yourſelves Treaſures on Earth, where Moth and Ruſt do corrupt, and Thieves break through and ſteal. But lay up for yourſelves Treaſures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Ruſt do corrupt, nor Thieves break through and ſteal. For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.* The Force of which Argument is founded upon this clear and convincing Ratiocination; to wit, That it is infinitely fooliſh, and below a Rational Creature *to place his Heart* upon that, which is, by no means, worth the placing of his *Heart upon*; and therefore, ſince it is undeniably evident, that a Man will place *his Heart* upon that, which he makes *his Treaſure*; it follows, that he cannot, without extream Folly, make

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any Thing *his Treasure*, which can neither be secured from *Rapine*, nor preserved from *Corruption*; as it is certain, that nothing in this World can.

This, I say, is the Sum and Force of our Saviour's *Argument*. In Pursuit of which, we are to observe, that there are *two Things* which offer themselves to Mankind, as Rivals for their Affections; to wit, *God* and the *World*. The Things of this *present* Life, and of the *future*. And the whole Strength of our Saviour's *Discourse* bears upon this Supposition, *That it is impossible for a Man to fix his Heart upon both*. No Man can make *Religion* his *Business*, and the *World* too: No Man can have *two Chief Goods*. It is indeed more impossible, than to *serve two Masters*. Forasmuch as the *Heart* is more laid out upon what a Man *loves*, than upon what *he serves*. Besides that the Soul is but of a stinted Operation; and cannot exert its full Force and Vigour upon two *diverse*, and much less *contrary* Objects. For that one of them will be perpetually Counter-working the other; and so far as the Soul inclines to *one*, it must in Proportion leave, and go off from the other; so that an *equal Adhesion* to them

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them both, implies in it a perfect *Contradiction*. For why elſe ſhould the Word of Truth ſo poſitively tell us, *That if we love the World, the Love of the Father is not, cannot be in us?* 1 *Joh.* ii. 15. Men, I know, think to *join both*, but it is becauſe they underſtand *neither*. For a Man muſt firſt have two *Hearts*, and two *Souls*, and two *Selves*, before he can give an *Heart to God*, and an Heart to the *World* too. And therefore, Chriſt does not ſtate this *Matter* upon a bare Priority of Acquiſition, as if he had bid Men *firſt lay up Treaſures for themſelves in Heaven*, and after that, allowed them, with the ſame Earneſtneſs, to provide themſelves *Treaſures here on Earth* likewiſe, (and ſo, by that Means ſucceſſively graſp the full Happineſs of *both Worlds*) For he knew, that the very Nature of the Thing itſelf made this *impracticable*, and not to be effected; foraſmuch as the Acquiſition of *either World* would certainly engage and take up the *whole Man*, and conſequently, leave nothing of him to be employed about *acquiring* the other.

Whereupon *Abraham* ſpeaking to the *rich Man in the Goſpel*, who had flouriſhed in his *Purple, and fine Linnen, and fared deliciouſly*

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liciously every Day, tells him, *That he, in his Life-Time, had received his good Things. His* they are called *emphatically*, *His* by peculiar Choice. They were the Things he chiefly valued and pitched upon, as the most likely to make him happy; and consequently, having actually enjoyed them, and thereby compassed the Utmost of his *Desires*, his *Happiness* was at an end; he *had his Option*; and there was no further *Provision* for him in the other World; nor indeed was it possible, that he should *find* any, where he had *laid up none*. Those Words of our Saviour being most *assuredly* true, whether applyed to Mens Endeavours after the Things of *this Life*, or of *another*: *That verily they have their Reward*. That is to say, the *Result* and *Issue* of their Labours will still be suitable to the *End*, which governed and directed them. For *where Men sow*, *there* they must expect to *reap*; it being infinitely absurd to bury *their Seed* in *the Earth*, and to expect *a Crop in Heaven*. And accordingly, in the xith of the *Hebrews*, we find, that at the same time the *Saints of Old* (there spoken of) declared themselves Expectants of a *Land* of *Promise* hereafter, they also declared themselves

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ſelves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* here. And therefore, let not Men mock and deceive themſelves, by thinking to compaſs *Heaven* with one Hand, and *Earth* with the *other*; and ſo to reign as Princes *in both*. For the Wiſdom of God has decreed it otherwiſe; and judged *one World* enough *for one Man*, though it gives him his *Choice of Two*.

It being clear therefore, that a Man cannot ſet *his Heart* both upon *God*, and the *World* too, as *his Treaſure, or Chief Good*; let us, in the next place, ſee, which of theſe *two* bids higheſt for this great Prize, *the Heart of Man*. And ſince there are but *theſe two*, there cannot be a more expedite Way to evince, that it belongs *to God*, than by proving the Abſurdity of placing it *upon the World*. And that will appear upon a double Account.

1. If we conſider *the World in Compariſon* with the *Heart*, or *Mind* of Man. And

2. If we conſider it *abſolutely* in itſelf. And

1. If we conſider it *in Compariſon with the Heart of Man*, we ſhall find, that the *Heart* has a ſuperlative Worth and Excellency above any Thing in *this World* beſides; and therefore,

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therefore, ought, by no means, to be bestowed, or laid out upon Things so vastly Inferiour to itself. For it is that noble Part of Man, which God has drawn and imprinted a lively Pourtraiture of his own Divine Nature upon; that Part which he has designed for his own peculiar Use. For God made the *Heart*, for no other Purpose, but that he might *dwell in* it; giving us *Understandings* able to pierce into, and look through the fairest and most specious Offers of this World, together with *Affections* large enough to swallow, and take down all that the whole Creation can set before them, and yet remain *hungry* and *unsatisfied* still. And are such Faculties as these (think we) fit to be entertained only with *Froth* and *Wind*, *Emptiness* and *Delusion?* And those Things can be no more, which are always promising Satisfaction, but never give it. For surely, such low Enjoyments, as *Meat*, *Drink*, and *Cloaths*, are not sufficient to satisfy, or make a Man happy; and yet, all the Necessities of the *Natural Life* are fully answered by these; and whatsoever, upon that Account, is desired more, is but the Result of a *false Appetite*, founded in no *real Want*, but only in Fancy and Opinion. Neverthe-

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leſs, there are, I confeſs, *ſpiritual Wants*, which nothing can ſatisfy, but what is *ſupernatural.*

And therefore, the *great* and *good* God, who gave us our very *Being*, and ſo can need nothing, that we either are, or have, yet vouchſafes to ſollicit, and even court our *Affections*; and ſets no other Price upon *Heaven*, *Glory*, and *Immortality*, nay, and upon *himſelf* too, but our *Love*; there being nothing truly Great and Glorious, which a *Creature* is capable of enjoying, but God is ready to give it a Man in Exchange for *his Heart.*

How high is *Reaſon*, and how ſtrong is *Love!* and ſurely, God never gave the Soul two ſuch *Wings*, only that we might *creep* upon the Ground, and place our *Heart*, and our *Foot* upon the ſame Level. Let the *Epicure* therefore, or voluptuous Man, from amongſt all his *Pleaſures*, ſingle out *that one*, which he reckons the beſt, the fulleſt, and moſt refined of all the reſt; and offer it to his *Reaſon* and *Affections*; and ſee, whether it can ſo acquit itſelf to the ſearching, impartial *Judgment* of the *one*, and the unlimited Appetite of the *other*; that when he ſhall have took his utmoſt Fill of it, and gone off from

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from the Enjoyment, he shall be able to say, here have I found all the Satisfaction, that could be thought of, or imagined; or his *Affections* be able to tell him, here have we had all the Sweetness, that could be wished for, or desired. But, on the contrary, do they not rather depart thirsty and melancholy, and abashed with the present Sense of their Disappointment, and still casting about for something or other, to piece up the Flaws and Defects of such broken Fruitions? So vast a Difference is there in these Matters, between *Surfeit* and *Satisfaction*.

The *Heart of Man* is intimately conscious to itself of its own Worth and Prerogative; and therefore, is never put to search for any Thing of Enjoyment here below, but it does it with a secret Regret and Disdain, Scorn and Indignation; like a Prince imprisoned, and forced to be ruled and fed by his own Subjects; for so it is with that Divine Being, the *Soul*, while depressed by the *Body* to a Condition so much below itself.

But God sent not Man into the World, with such mighty Endowments, so much *to enjoy it*, as to have the Honour of *despising* it; and upon a full Experience of its woful Vanity, *to find Cause* in all his Thoughts and

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Deſires to *return*, and *fly back* to his Maker; like the *Dove* to the Ark, *when it could reſt* no where elſe. But

2. We are to *conſider the World abſolutely in itſelf*; and ſo we ſhall find the moſt valued Enjoyments of it embaſed by theſe two Qualifications. 1ſt, *That they are periſhing.* And 2dly, *That they are out of our Power:* One of them expreſſed by *Moths and Ruſt corrupting them*, and the other by *Thieves breaking through, and ſtealing them.* The firſt repreſenting them, as ſubject *to decay* from a Principle within; the ſecond, *as liable to be forced from us*, by a Violence from without; and ſo, upon both Accounts, utterly *unable* to make Men *happy*, and conſequently, *unworthy* to take Poſſeſſion of *their Hearts.*

1. And firſt, For *the periſhing State and Quality* of all theſe *worldly* Enjoyments. A Thing ſo evident, or rather obvious to common Senſe and Experience, that no Man in his right Wits can really doubt of it, and yet ſo univerſally contradicted by Mens Practice, that ſcarce any Man ſeems to believe it. No; though *the Spirit of God in Scripture* is as full and home in the Character it gives of theſe Things, as *Experience* itſelf can be; ſometimes expreſſing them by *Faſhions*, which,

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which, we know, are always *changing*; and sometimes by *Shadows*, which no Man can take any Hold of; and sometimes by *Dreams*, which are all Mockery and Delusion: Thus degrading the most admired Grandeurs of the World from *Realities* to bare *Appearances*, and from *Appearances* to meer *Nothings*.

Nor do they fail only, and lose that little Worth they have, but they do it also by the vilest and most contemptible Things in Nature; by *Rust* and *Cankers*, *Moths* and *Vermin*, Things which grow out of the very *Subject* they destroy, and so make the *Destruction* of it inevitable. And how can any better be expected, when Men will rather *dig* their *Treasure* and Comforts from *beneath*, than fetch them from *above?* For it is impossible for such *Mortals to put on Immortality*, or for Things, in the very Nature of them, calculated but for a few Days, to last for ever. All *sublunary* Comforts imitate the *Changeableness*, as well as feel the *Influence* of the *Planet* they are under. Time, like a River, carries them all away with a rapid Course, they swim above the Stream for a while, but are quickly swallowed up, and seen no more. The very *Monuments* Men

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raiſe to perpetuate *their Names*, conſume and moulder away themſelves, and proclaim their own *Mortality*, as well as teſtify that of others. In a word, all theſe earthly *Funds* have *Deficiencies* in them, never to be made up.

But now, on the other ſide, the Enjoyments above, and the *Treaſures* propoſed to us by our *Saviour*, are *indefectible* in their Nature, and *endleſs* in their Duration. They are ſtill full, freſh, and entire, like the *Stars* and *Orbs* above, which ſhine with the ſame *undiminiſhed* Luſtre, and move with the ſame *unwearyed* Motion, with which they did from the firſt Date of their Creation. Nay, the *Joys of Heaven* will abide, when theſe *Lights of Heaven* ſhall be put out; and when *Sun* and *Moon*, and *Nature* itſelf ſhall be diſcharged their Stations, and be employed by Providence no more; the *Righteous* ſhall then appear in their full Glory; and being fixed in the *Divine* Preſence, enjoy one perpetual and everlaſting *Day*; a *Day* commenſurate to the unlimited Eternity of God himſelf; the *great Sun* of Righteouſneſs, who is *always riſing, and never* ſets.

2. The other *degrading Qualification of theſe worldly Enjoyments, is, That they are out*

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out of our Power. And surely, that is very unfit for a Man to account his *Treasure*, which he cannot so much as *call his own*; nor extend his Title to, so far as the very next *Minute*; as having no Command, nor Hold of it at all, beyond the present actual Possession; and the Compass of the *Present* (all know) is but *one Remove* from *Nothing*. A *rich Man* to Day, and a *Beggar* to Morrow, is neither new, nor wonderful in the Experience of the World: For he, who is *rich now*, must ask the Rapacity of *Thieves*, *Pyrats*, and *Tyrants*, how long he shall continue so; and rest content to be happy for just so much Time, as the Pride and Violence, the Cruelty and Avarice of the worst of Men shall permit him to be so; a comfortable Tenure, doubtless, for a Man to hold his chief Happiness by.

But now, on the contrary, nothing is so *absolutely* and *essentially* necessary to render any Thing a Man's *Treasure or Chief Good*, as that he have a *Property in it*, and a *Power over it*; without which, it will be impossible for him to *be sure of* any Relief from it, when he shall most *need it*. For how can he be *sure of* that, of which he has no *Command?* And how can *he command* that, which a

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greater Force than his own ſhall lay Claim to? For let thoſe puny Things, called *Law and Right*, ſay what they will to the contrary, if the Matter comes once to a Diſpute, all the good Things a Man has of this World, will be his, who has the *ſtrongeſt* Arm, and the *ſharpeſt* Sword, or the corrupteſt Judge on his Side. They are the Prey of the Mighty, and the Prize of victorious Villany; ſubject to be torn and raviſhed from him upon all Occaſions.

Nor has the Providence of God thought it worth while to ſecure and protect the very beſt of Men in their Rights to any Enjoyment under Heaven; and all this, to *depreſs* and *vilify* theſe Things in their Thoughts; that ſo they may, every Day, find a Neceſſity of placing them *above*, and of beſtowing their *Pains* upon that, which if they *purſue*, they ſhall certainly *obtain*, and if they obtain, they ſhall impregnably *keep*. *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you*, (ſays our Saviour) *not as the World giveth, give I unto you.* Why? What was the Difference? He tells us in *Joh.* xvi. 22. *Your Joy no Man taketh from you.* It was ſuch a *Joy or Peace*, as was to be above the Reach of either *Fraud* or *Force*, *Artifice* or *Aſſault*;

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Assault; which can never be said of any Earthly Enjoyment whatsoever; either as to the *Acquisition*, or *Possession* of it: God having made no Man any Promise, that by all his *Vertue* and *Innocence*, all his *Skill* and *Industry*, he shall be able to continue in *Health*, *Wealth*, or *Honour*; but that after his utmost Endeavour to preserve those desirable Things, he may, in the Issue, lose them all.

But God has promised and engaged to Mankind, that whosoever shall faithfully and constantly *persevere* in the Duties of a Pious, Christian Life, shall obtain *an eternal Crown of Glory*, and an *Inheritance that fadeth not away*. A Man cannot, indeed, by all *his Piety secure* his Estate, but he may *make his Calling and Election sure*; which is infinitely and unspeakably more valuable, than all the *Estates*, *Pleasures*, and *Greatness* of the World. For all these are *without* him, and consequently, may be taken from him, and which is yet worse, may do him no Good, even while they stay with him. But the *Conscience* is a sure *Repository* for a Man to lodge and preserve his *Treasure* in, and the *Chest of* his *own Heart* can never *be forced open*.

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Now, the *Uſe* and Improvement of the foregoing Particulars ſhall be briefly to convince us of the extreme Vanity of moſt Mens Pretences to Religion. A Man's Religion is all the Claim he has to the Felicities of another World. But can we think it poſſible in Nature, for a Man to place his *greateſt Happineſs*, where he does not place his *ſtrongeſt Affections!* how little is the other World in moſt Mens *Thoughts*, and yet they can have the Confidence to pretend it to be the grand Object of their *Deſires*. But why ſhould Men, in their greateſt Concern, be ſo falſe to their own Experience, and thoſe conſtant Obſervations which they make of themſelves in other Matters? For let any Man conſult, and ask his own Heart, whether having once fixed his *Love* upon any Thing or Perſon, his *Thoughts* are not always running after it? Strong *Love* is a Byaſs upon the *Thoughts*; and for a Man to *love earneſtly*, and not to *think almoſt continually* of what he loves, is as impoſſible, as for him to *live*, and not to *breathe*.

But, beſides this, we have ſhewn ſeveral other *Marks* and *Properties*, by which Men may infallibly judge of the Truth and Firmneſs of their Love to God, and to Religion;

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as for instance, can they affirm Religion to be that, which has got such Hold of their Hearts, that no *Time*, *Cost*, or *Labour* shall be thought too much to be laid out upon it? Is it the *Prize* they run for? Is it the Thing they *delight* in? The Thing, with which in all their Distresses, they *support* and keep up their sinking Spirits? And lastly, is it that, which they value to such a Degree, as to be willing to part with all the World, rather than lose, or renounce it? These are *great Things* I confess, and yet *nothing less* will reach the Measures of Christianity.

But the Lives of Men (unanswerable Arguments in this Case) are a sad Demonstration, how few they are, who come up to these Terms. Men may, indeed, now and then bestow some scattering Thoughts upon their *Souls*, and their *Future Estate*, provided they be at full Leisure from their *Business*, and their *Sports*, (which they seldom or never are) and if, at any Time, they should be so, this could amount to no more, than their being religious, when *they have nothing else to* do. Likewise, when the *solemn Returns of God's Publick Worship*, and the *Law* and *Custom* of the Nation shall call them off from their daily Employments to better Things,

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Things, they may perhaps, by a few devout *Looks* and *Words*, put on ſomething of an *Holy-Day-Dreſs* for the Preſent; which yet, like their *Sunday-Cloaths*, they are ſure to lay aſide again for the whole Week after. All which, and a great deal more, is far ſhort of making Religion a Man's *Buſineſs*; though yet if it be not ſo, it is in Effect nothing.

And this Men know well enough, when they are to deal in Matters of this World; in which, no *Pains*, nor *Importunity* ſhall be thought too great, no *Attendance* too *ſervile*, nothing (in a word) *too hard* to be done or ſuffered, either to *recruit* a *broken* Fortune, or to *regain* a *diſguſted* Friend; though after all, ſhould a Man chance to recover *both*, he cannot be *ſure* of keeping *either*. In like manner, let the *trading Perſon* ſuffer any conſiderable Damage in the Stock, with which he trades; what *Care*, what *Parſimony*, what *Art* ſhall be uſed to *make up* the Breach, and *keep the Shop ſtill open?* And the Reaſon of all this, is, becauſe the Man is in *Earneſt*, in what he does, and accordingly, acts as one who is ſo. Whereas, in Mens ſpiritual Affairs, look all the World over, and you ſhall every Day ſee, that the *Sins* which *wound* and *waſte*, and make *Ha-*

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vock of the Conscience, which *divide* and *cut it off* from God, are committed easily, and passed over lightly, and owned confidently; with a *bold Front*, and a *brazen Face*, able to look the *Pillory* itself out of Countenance; nor does any one, almost, think himself so mortally struck, even by the foulest Guilt, as to need the Balsam of an immediate *Repentance*; and a present Suing out of *Pardon* at the Throne of Grace. And yet, if a Man dies, as to his temporal Condition, poor and bankrupt, he is not at all the worse, but if he goes *out of* the World unreconciled to God, it had been good for him, that he had never come *into it*. For what can it avail a Man to pass from *Misery to Misery*, and to make one wretched Life only a Preparative to another?

In fine, this we may with great Boldness venture to affirm, That if Men would be at half the Pains to provide themselves *Treasures in Heaven*, which they are generally at *to get Estates* here on Earth, it were impossible for any Man to be damned. But when we come to Earthly Matters, we *do*; when to Heavenly, we only *discourse*; *Heaven* has our *Tongue* and *Talk*; but the *Earth* our *whole Man* besides.

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Nevertheless, let Men rest assured of this, that God has so ordered the great Business of their eternal Happiness, that their *Affections* must still be the Fore-runners of their *Persons*, the constant *Harbingers* appointed by God to go, and take Possession of those glorious *Mansions* for them; and consequently, *That no Man shall ever come to Heaven himself, who has not sent his Heart thither before him.* For where this leads the Way, the other will be sure to follow.

Now to him, who alone is the great Judge of Hearts, and Rewarder of Persons, be rendred and ascribed, as is most due, all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

FINIS.

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